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SOUTHERN NEWS COMPANY

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BLONDE PHANTOM

STOP, JENNY! PUT DOWN THAT GUN! YOU CAN'T FIX THINGS WITH A BULLET! JENNY, LISTEN TO ME... DON'T DO IT... **DON'T!**

COMI

I'LL GET THAT SKUNK! I'LL GIVE HIM WHAT HE DESERVES BEFORE HE CAN DO TO OTHER TRUSTING GIRLS WHAT HE DID TO ME! I WON'T LET HIM ROB THAT POOR KID IN THERE--- AND DON'T TRY TO STOP ME, I'M WARNING YOU!

ACME
THEATRICAL
AGENCY

SURE, BABY---STICK WITH ME AND I'LL PUT YOUR NAME IN LIGHTS! I'LL MAKE YA A STAR, BABY. YES SIR, A STAR! NOW LEMME HAVE THE FIRST PAYMENT, TO FIX THE DEAL!

EVERYBODY WANTED TO KILL HIM! AND SOMEBODY DID!!! BUT THE BLONDE PHANTOM AND MARK MASON DIDN'T DREAM THAT HIS DEATH WOULD BRING THEM SO CLOSE TO THE BRINK OF DISASTER!

DON'T MISS THIS
SENSATIONALLY
GRIPPING TALE OF
TANGLED LIVES!

"THE MAN WHO
DESERVED TO DIE!"

Here's the Greatest **BILFOLD BARGAIN** in all America!

4 BIG VALUES in ONE

All for only
\$1.98

- ★ This Smart Leather Billfold and Pass Case
- ★ Handy, Built-In Coin Holder For Your Loose Change
- ★ Genuine Rabbit's Foot Key Holder With Flexible Gilt Chain
- ★ 3-Color Identification Plate

Beautifully Engraved with
Your Name, Address and
Social Security Number

YOU GET THIS!
Smart looking, beautifully
styled leather billfold with
pass case to hold membership
and credit cards. Protected
snap feature locks
securely so currency and
valuables can't fall out.



Here's The BUILT-IN COIN HOLDER

COIN HOLDER
IS SECURELY RIVETED TO BILFOLD

This Smart LEATHER BILFOLD
Comes to You Complete with

- ★ Large Built-In COIN HOLDER
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- ★ An Engraved IDENTIFICATION PLATE

Your Permanent
Engraved Identification
and Social Security Tag

Clear-
View
CELLULOID
PASS
LEAVES

**YOUR FULL NAME, Address, City
and State is BEAUTIFULLY ENGRAVED
on the 3-Color Social Security Plate!!**

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VALUE

Smart
STYLING

Here's something new in a billfold. Without a doubt the handiest and greatest billfold bargain that you'll be likely to see for a good many years to come. Designed by skilled billfold craftsmen and made available to our customers at a price that's sensationally low for a billfold with so many unusual features. If you have shopped around you know that it is virtually impossible to get even an ordinary type billfold which holds just currency for less than \$2.00. Then take a good look at this new smart leather billfold and see all you get for only \$1.98. Besides the spacious compartment at the back which can be used for currency, checks, papers, etc., there's a beautiful plastic coin holder for your loose change built right into your billfold. Then there's a built-in Pass Case with 4 pockets each protected by celluloid to prevent the rolling of your valuable membership and credit cards. We also send you a genuine Rabbit's Foot and attached Gilt Chain for your keys in addition to a specially designed 3-color Emergency Identification Plate, on which we engrave your Social Security Number, your name and your address.

Now, here's a billfold for you. Actually 4 Big Values in One. Everything you need, everything you use regularly, right where you want them. Easy to get at! Handy! Efficient! Invaluable! The nearest, most complete billfold you've ever seen. No rush your order today. If after receiving your billfold you don't agree that this is the most outstanding bargain you ever came across, return it and we'll cheerfully refund your money.

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1227 Loyola Ave., Chicago 26, Ill.

Please rush me the "Smart Leather Pass Case Billfold" with Built-In Coin Holder, Genuine Rabbit's Foot Key Holder and engraved 3-Color Social Security Plate. (On arrival I will pay postman only \$1.98 plus 20% Federal Tax and few cents postage and C.O.D. charge.) It is understood that if I am not positively thrilled and delighted in every way I can return the billfold within 10 days for full refund.

MY FULL NAME

(PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY)

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

☐ To save shipping charges I am enclosing in advance \$1.98 plus 20% Federal Excise tax (total \$2.32).

• Social Security No.

Please ship my billfold under all postage charges prepaid.



NOTE: No C.O.D. Orders to Canada

ILLINOIS MERCHANDISE MART
1227 Loyola Ave. Chicago 26, Ill.

SEND NO MONEY!
JUST MAIL THIS COUPON TODAY

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BLONDE PHANTOM

ALL RIGHT, MASON---WE'VE GOT THE GOODS ON YOU! CONFESS, MASON, **CONFESS!**

HE DID IT, I KNOW! MARK MASON IS THE **KILLER!**

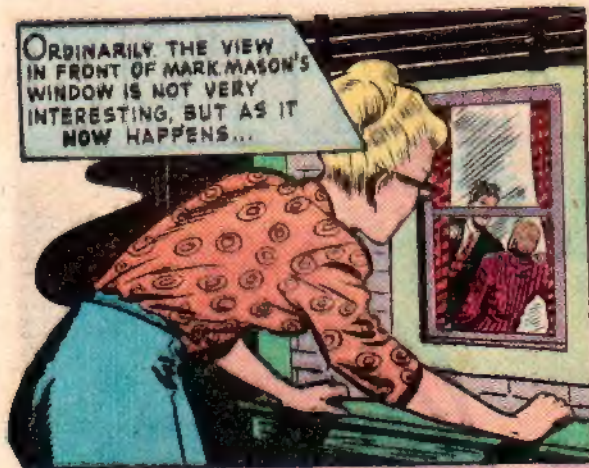


FOR EVERY STARRY-EYED GIRL WHO SEEKS FAME AND FORTUNE ON BROADWAY, THERE'S A CUNNING TRICKSTER TO PROMISE HER THE MOON, AND STEAL HER LAST PENNY! HERE IS A STARTLING ADVENTURE ON THE GREAT WHITE WAY AS MARK MASON FACES A MURDER CHARGE AND THE **BLONDE PHANTOM** FOLLOWS A DANGER TRAIL, SEEKING THE ANSWER TO THE VIOLENT DEATH OF...

"The MAN who DESERVED to DIE!"



ORDINARILY THE VIEW
IN FRONT OF MARK MASON'S
WINDOW IS NOT VERY
INTERESTING, BUT AS IT
NOW HAPPENS...



SURE! YOU'RE SAFE FROM
THE LAW, "CHISELER"!

PLEASE, MARK--- I
TRY TO HELP **EVERY**
ACTRESS WHO PAYS
MY FEE!



MARK HAS GONE CALLING ON "CHISELER" HOGAN, THEATRICAL AGENT!

THAT TEMPER
OF MARKS MIGHT VERY
EASILY LAND HIM IN
REAL TROUBLE!

SOMETHING'S WRONG WITH
THAT GIRL!



YOU ALL
RIGHT,
LADY?

OF-
OF
COURSE!

MASON...
DON'T!
UGH!



I'M PERFECTLY
ALL RIGHT!

YOU **DO** NEED A
PLACE TO **REST**
FOR A FEW MINUTES!

CRASH

BERT
HOGAN
THEATRICAL
AGENT



AS THE BLONDE
PHANTOM
ENTERS THE
HALLWAY, SHE
SEES A GIRL
COMING OUT
OF AN ELEVATOR,
AND...

B-BUT I HAVE AN
APPOINTMENT
WITH MR. HOGAN, DOWN
DOWN THE HALL!

I DON'T THINK
MR. HOGAN IS
SEEING ANY-
ONE RIGHT
NOW, MISS!

MASON...
STOP!

HE'S IN. ER,
CONFERENCE-
WITH MARK
MASON!

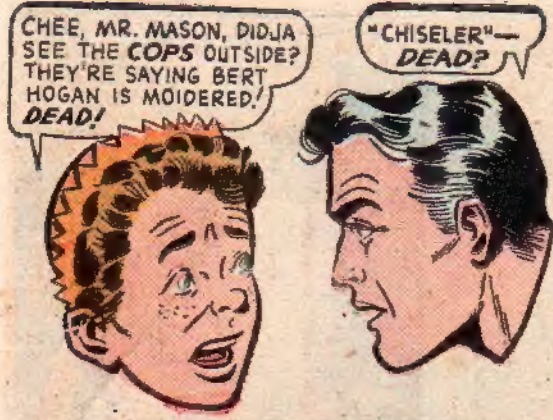
THIS IS
WHAT I THINK
OF PUNKS
WHO TAKE
ADVANTAGE
OF STAR-
STRUCK GALS!

CRASH

DANG







CHEE, MR. MASON, DIDJA SEE THE COPS OUTSIDE? THEY'RE SAYING BERT HOGAN IS MOIDERED! **DEAD!**

"CHISELER"—**DEAD?**



YEAH, MARK, HE'S **DEAD** AND THE FUTURE DON'T LOOK SO ROSY FOR YOU! MY LETTER OPENER!

MEET INSPECTOR FLINT...



YOUR NAME'S ON IT—WE FOUND IT STUCK IN HOGAN'S RIBS! AND LOOK AT THOSE **KNUCKLES!**

SURE! I **DID** SOCK HOGAN!



BUT THAT'S **ALL!** I JUST **SOCKED** HIM!

HE DIDN'T KILL HOGAN, BOYS! BE **SENSIBLE!**



LISSEN, I'M ONLY A **COP**, AND I BELIEVE WHAT I **SEE!**

LOOKS LIKE I'M IN A TOUGH SPOT THIS TIME, **BLONDE PHANTOM!**



BETTER CHEW SOME CALORIES, JENNIFER! BOTH OF US ARE GOING TO NEED PLENTY OF ZIP TO GET MARK OUT OF THIS JAM!

DON'T WORRY, MARK---I'LL FIND SOME WAY TO CLEAR YOU OF THIS **ABSDUR** CHARGE!



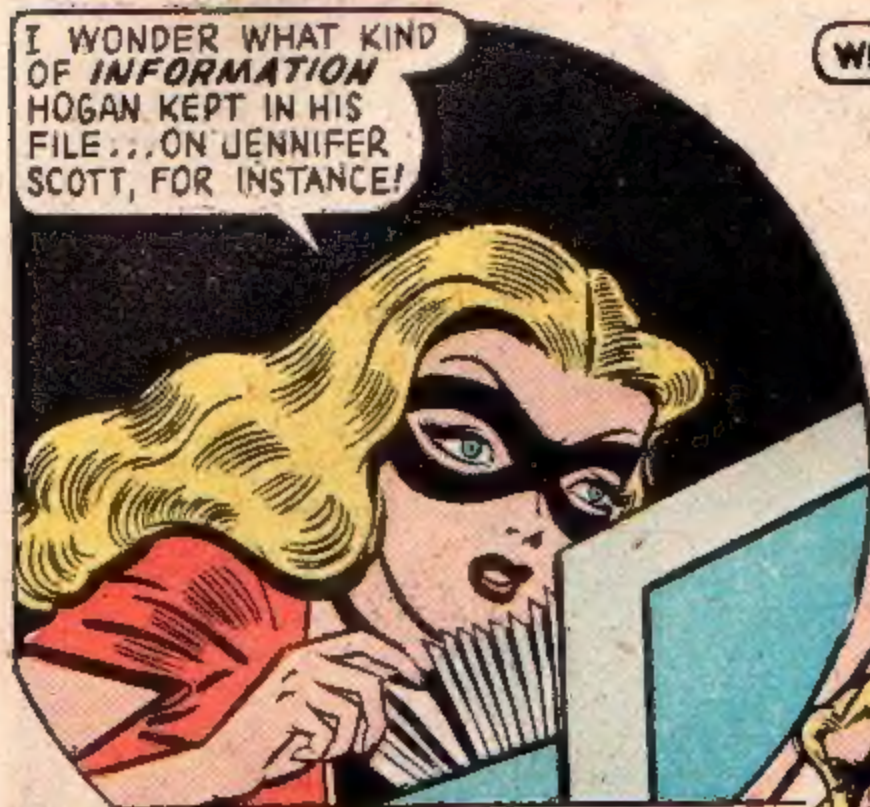
A FEW MINUTES LATER,
AT THE DEAD MAN'S
ROOM...

MIND IF I
LOOK AROUND,
BOYS?

THINGS SURE LOOK
BAD FOR MASON!
SURE, GO AHEAD,
BLONDE PHANTOM!



SOMEONE MIGHT HAVE *HIDDEN*
HERE WHILE MARK WAS WITH
"CHISELER" NO SIGN
OF HIM, THOUGH!



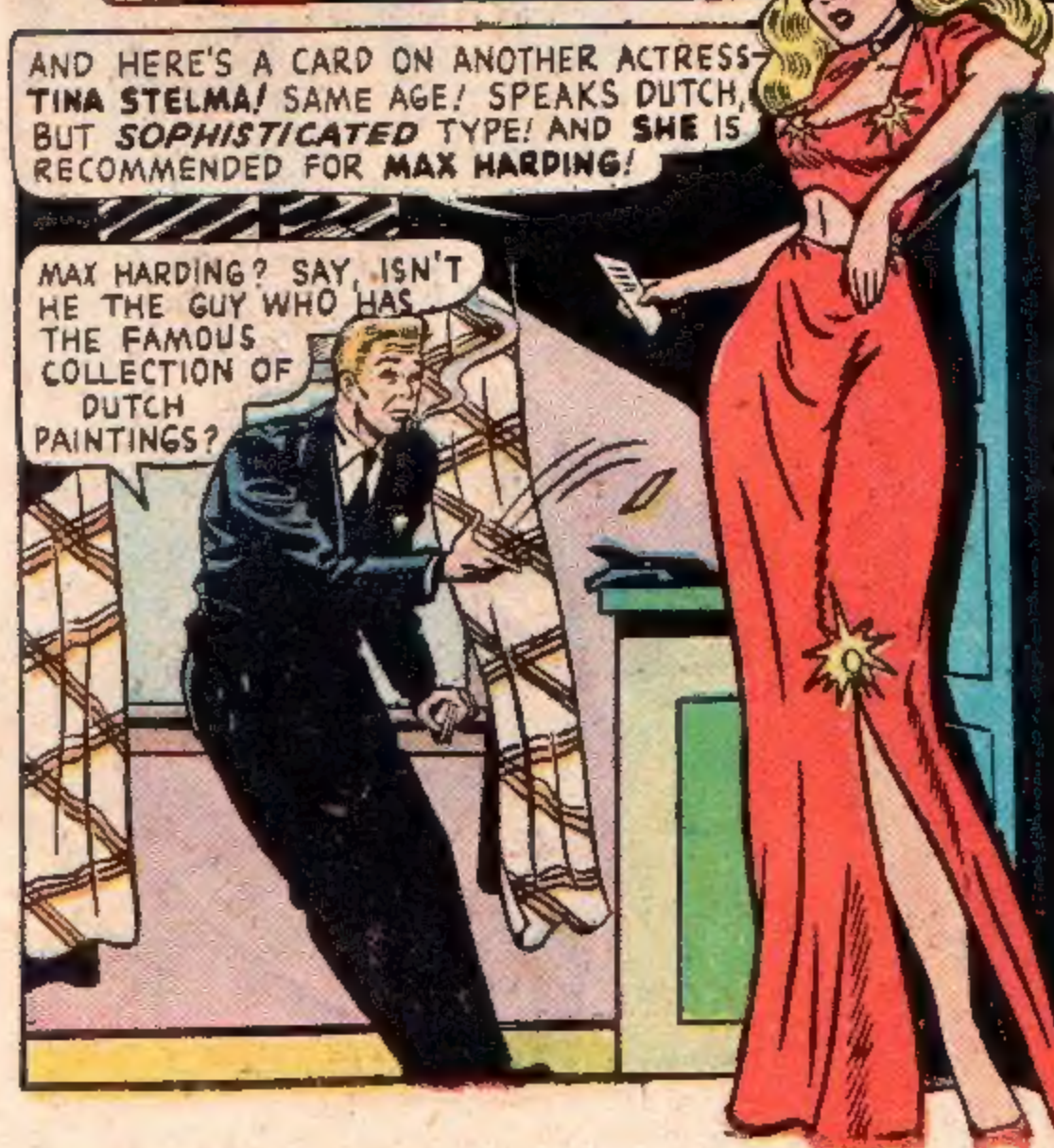
I WONDER WHAT KIND
OF *INFORMATION*
HOGAN KEPT IN HIS
FILE... ON JENNIFER
SCOTT, FOR INSTANCE!

WHITNEY BOWMAN!



JENNIFER SCOTT
AGE 23... INBENUE TYPE
EXCELLENT ACTRESS
SPEAKS FRENCH
FLUENTLY

Recommended for
Whitney Bowman

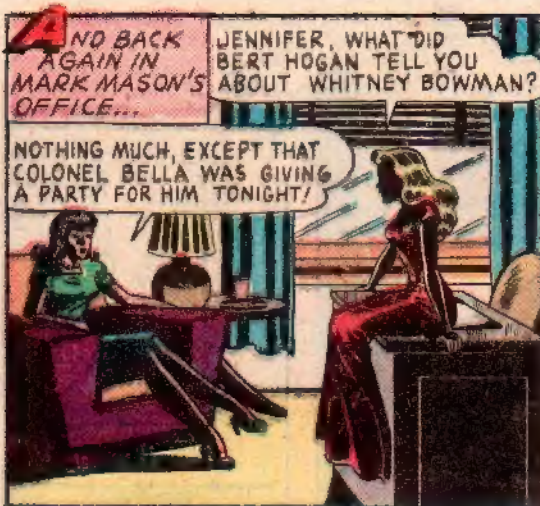


AND HERE'S A CARD ON ANOTHER ACTRESS—
TINA STELMA! SAME AGE! SPEAKS DUTCH,
BUT *SOPHISTICATED* TYPE! AND *SHE* IS
RECOMMENDED FOR **MAX HARDING!**

MAX HARDING? SAY, ISN'T
HE THE GUY WHO HAS
THE FAMOUS
COLLECTION OF
DUTCH
PAINTINGS?

THE SAME, AND WHITNEY BOWMAN
IS PRESIDENT OF NATIONAL OIL —
HAS ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS
COLLECTIONS OF RARE CHINA IN
THE WORLD! *BOTH* OF THESE
MEN COLLECT OBJECTS OF ART!

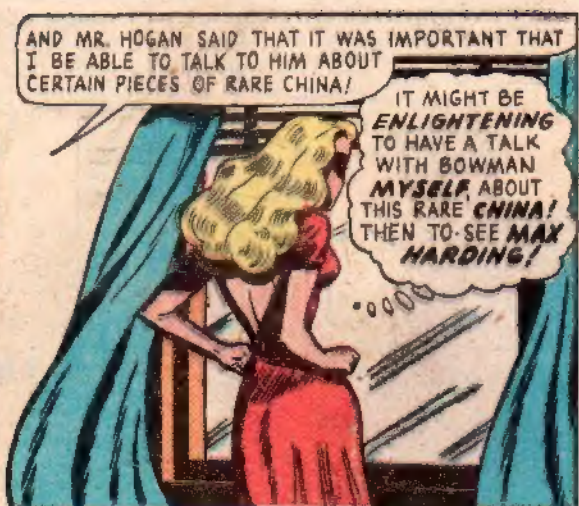




AND BACK AGAIN IN MARK MASON'S OFFICE...

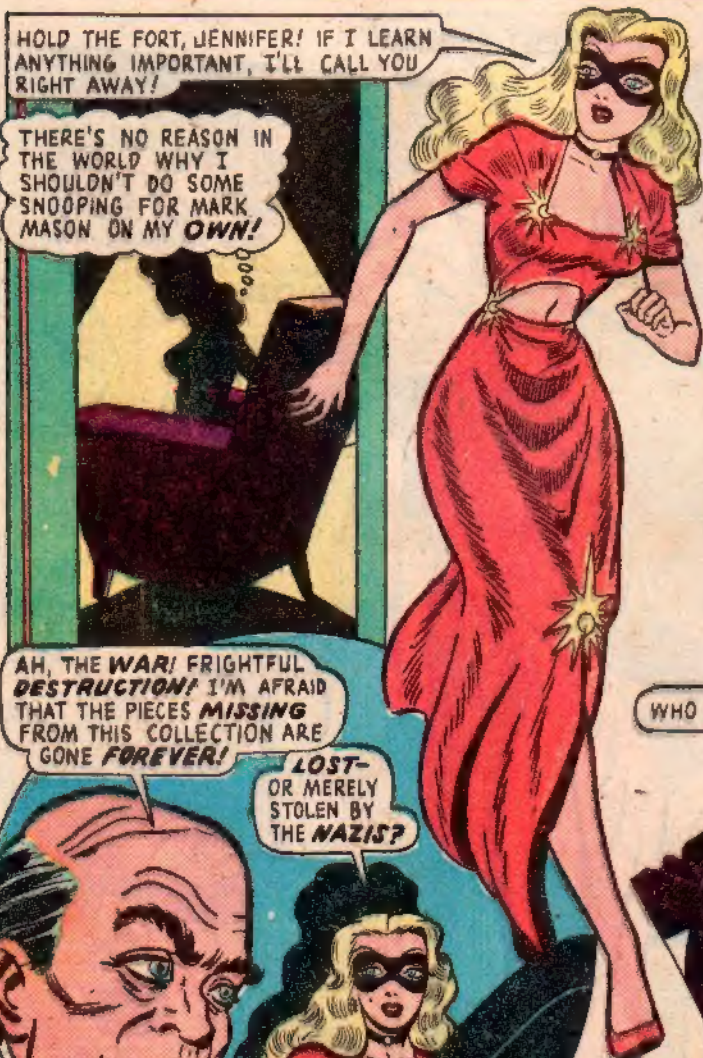
JENNIFER, WHAT DID BERT HOGAN TELL YOU ABOUT WHITNEY BOWMAN?

NOTHING MUCH, EXCEPT THAT COLONEL BELLA WAS GIVING A PARTY FOR HIM TONIGHT!



AND MR. HOGAN SAID THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT I BE ABLE TO TALK TO HIM ABOUT CERTAIN PIECES OF RARE CHINA!

IT MIGHT BE ENLIGHTENING TO HAVE A TALK WITH BOWMAN MYSELF, ABOUT THIS RARE CHINA! THEN TO SEE MAX HARDING!



HOLD THE FORT, JENNIFER! IF I LEARN ANYTHING IMPORTANT, I'LL CALL YOU RIGHT AWAY!

THERE'S NO REASON IN THE WORLD WHY I SHOULDN'T DO SOME SNOOPING FOR MARK MASON ON MY OWN!



LATER, INSIDE THE ELEGANT TOWN HOUSE OF WHITNEY BOWMAN...

MY DEAR, YOU'RE INTERESTED IN RARE CHINA? LOOK AT THIS FOR COLOR, FOR WORKMANSHIP! PRICELESS EACH ONE OF THEM!

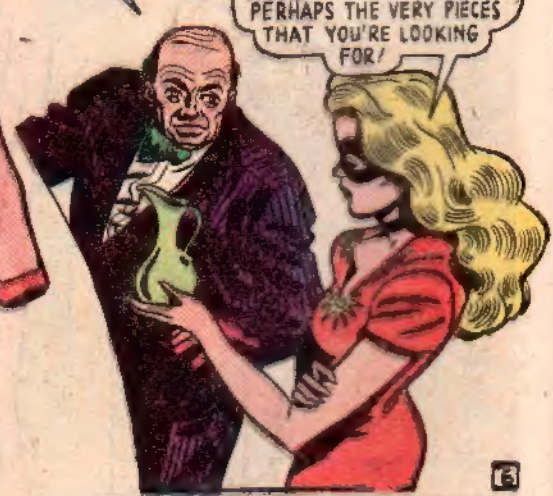
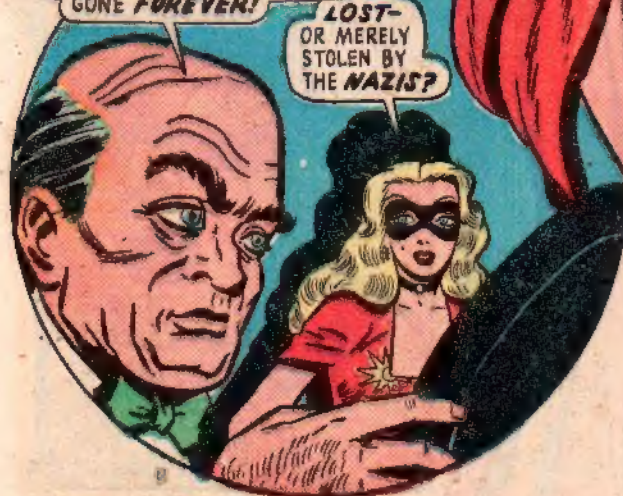
I HEARD THAT THE WAR PREVENTED YOUR COMPLETING THE COLLECTION, MR. BOWMAN!

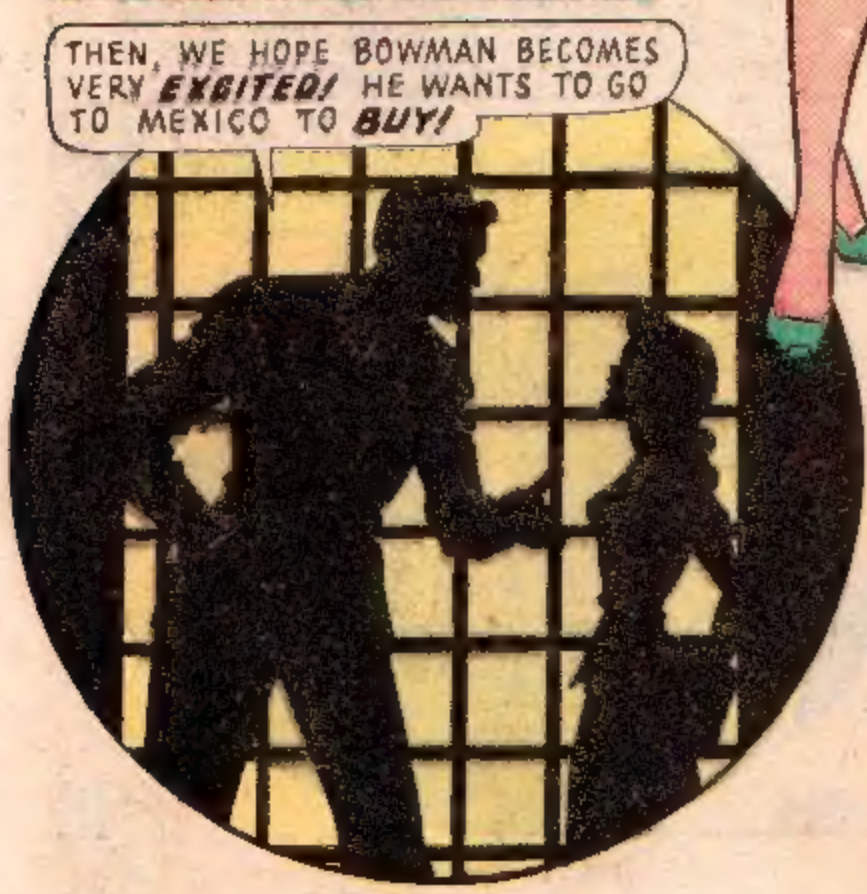
AH, THE WAR! FRIGHTFUL DESTRUCTION! I'M AFRAID THAT THE PIECES MISSING FROM THIS COLLECTION ARE GONE FOREVER!

LOST- OR MERELY STOLEN BY THE NAZIS?

WHO KNOWS?

RUMOR HAS IT THAT CERTAIN PEOPLE CAME HERE WITH NAZI LOOT! PERHAPS THE VERY PIECES THAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR!







TAKE HIS MONEY?

AH, SUCH A PLAN! I SHALL TEACH HIM THE VALUABLE LESSON THAT IT IS NOT NICE EVEN TO TRY TO BUY NAZI LOOT... WITH A GUN IN MY HAND!

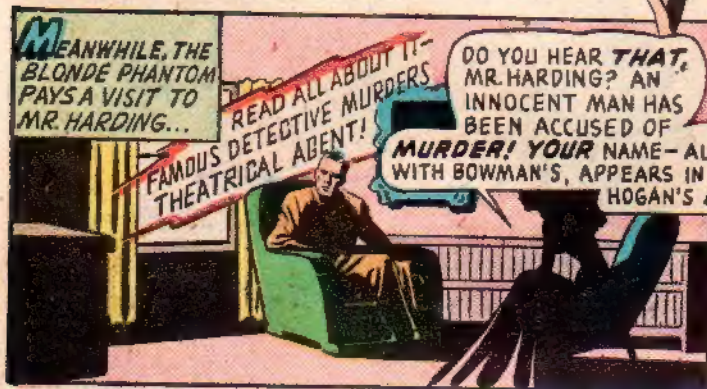


BOWMAN IS A RESPECTED MAN WHO WILL NOT EVEN SAY "BOO" — BECAUSE HE **HIMSELF** HAS TRIED TO DO SOMETHING AGAINST THE LAW!

I'M GOING TO CALL THE POLICE RIGHT NOW!



ACH! SUCH A LITTLE IDIOT! WE SHALL QUIETLY SIP TEA UNTIL THE BLONDE PHANTOM COMES HERE TO QUESTION ME, AND THEN...



MEANWHILE, THE BLONDE PHANTOM PAYS A VISIT TO MR. HARDING...

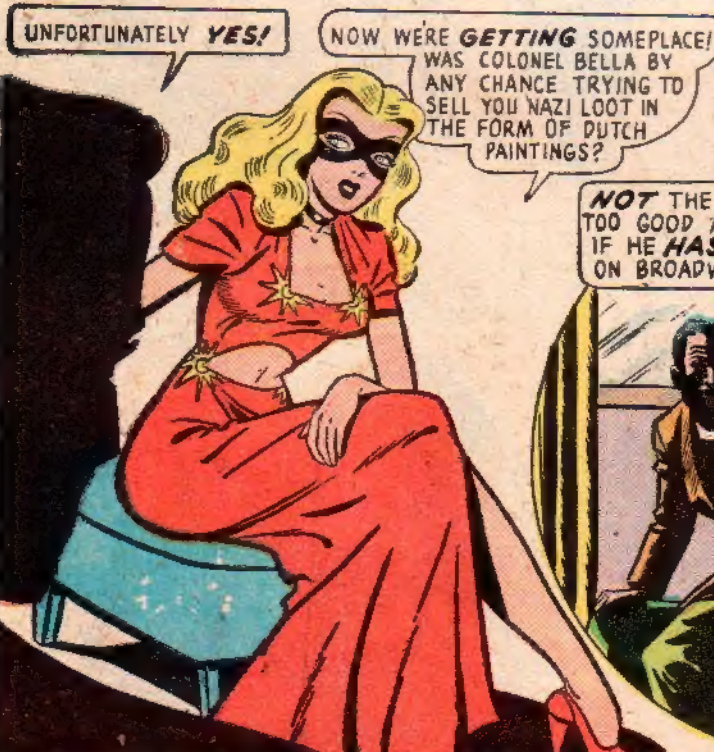
READ ALL ABOUT IT! FAMOUS DETECTIVE MURDERS THEATRICAL AGENT!

DO YOU HEAR **THAT**, MR. HARDING? AN INNOCENT MAN HAS BEEN ACCUSED OF **MURDER!** YOUR NAME— ALONG WITH BOWMAN'S, APPEARS IN HOGAN'S FILES!



I'M TELLING THE TRUTH, BLONDE PHANTOM! I NEVER HEARD OF HOGAN UNTIL TODAY!

BUT—COLONEL BELLA— YOU HAVE HEARD OF HIM!



UNFORTUNATELY YES!

NOW WE'RE GETTING SOMEPLACE! WAS COLONEL BELLA BY ANY CHANCE TRYING TO SELL YOU NAZI LOOT IN THE FORM OF DUTCH PAINTINGS?

NOT THE COLONEL HIMSELF! HE'S FAR TOO GOOD A SHOWMAN FOR **THAT**, EVEN IF HE HAS LOST MOST OF HIS MONEY. ON BROADWAY FLOPS!



THEN THIS DUTCH GIRL MADE THE PLANT! **TINA STELMA!** SHE CONTACTED YOU!

ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT! I'LL **TELL** YOU! THIS GIRL **INNOCENTLY**, I BELIEVE, PLAYED A **PART!** SHE TOLD ME ABOUT A DUTCH UNCLE OF HERS IN MEXICO WITH TWO REMBRANDTS LOOTED BY THE NAZIS!

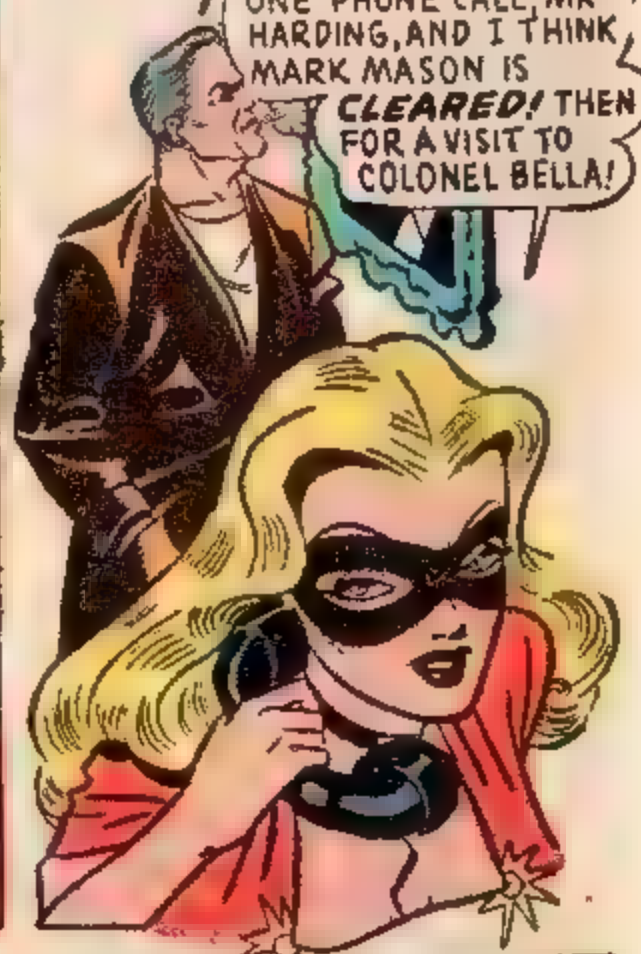


UH-HUH!

AND TWO WEEKS AGO, I WENT TO MEXICO WITH \$150,000 IN CASH, ITCHING TO **BUY!** INSTEAD OF A DUTCH UNCLE I MET COLONEL BELLA IN A HOTEL ROOM! HE TOOK THE CASH AND DARED ME TO CALL THE POLICE!



IN EXCHANGE I GOT **NOTHING** BUT A GOOD LESSON IN COLLECTOR'S ETHICS!



ONE PHONE CALL, MR. HARDING, AND I THINK MARK MASON IS **CLEARED!** THEN FOR A VISIT TO COLONEL BELLA!

HOWEVER A SHORT TIME LATER.

THIS WAY, MISS! THE COLONEL IS **EXPECTING** YOU FOR TEA!

SUCH HOSPITALITY!



I SUPPOSE BY **NOW** YOU HAVE MADE CERTAIN CLEVER DEDUCTIONS - EH? YOU HAVE LOOKED THROUGH HOGAN'S FILES, WHICH I DID NOT HAVE TIME TO CLEAN OUT!

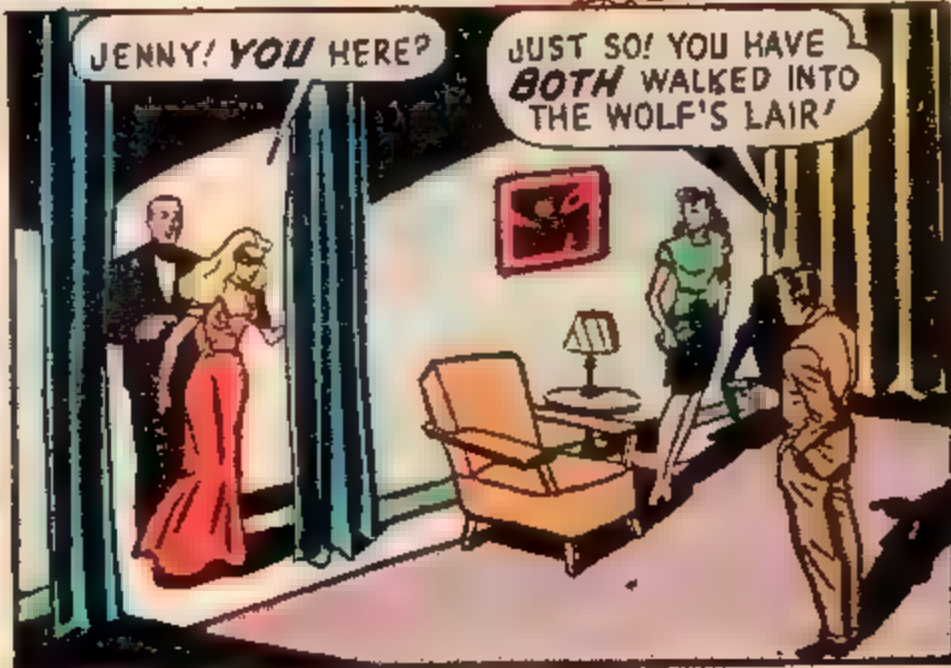


AFTER YOU STUCK MARK'S KNIFE INTO HOGAN!



JENNY! **YOU** HERE?

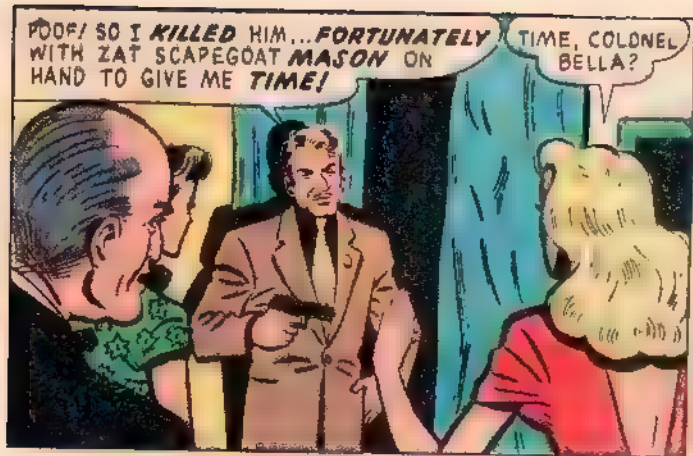
JUST SO! YOU HAVE **BOTH** WALKED INTO THE WOLF'S LAIR!



BAH! ZAT "CHISELER" TRIED TO CHARGE ME A **FEE** WHEN HE BLUNDERED INTO MY **REAL** PLANS!

THAT MUST TRY YOUR PATIENCE A GREAT DEAL, COLONEL!



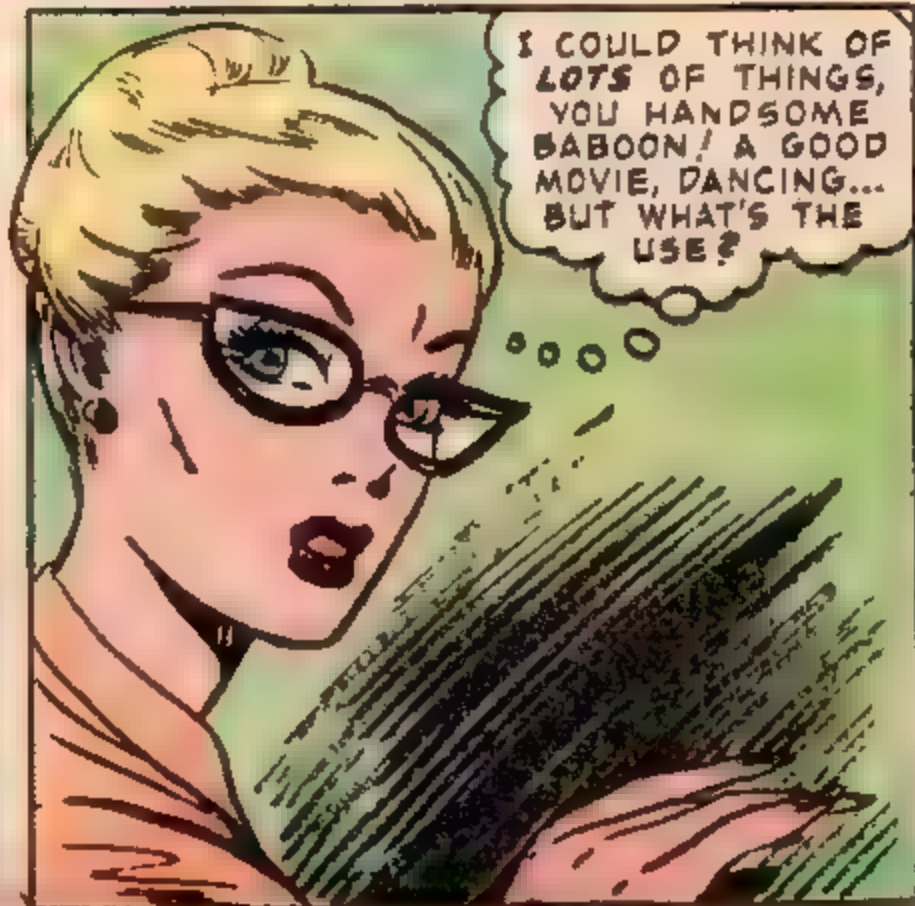


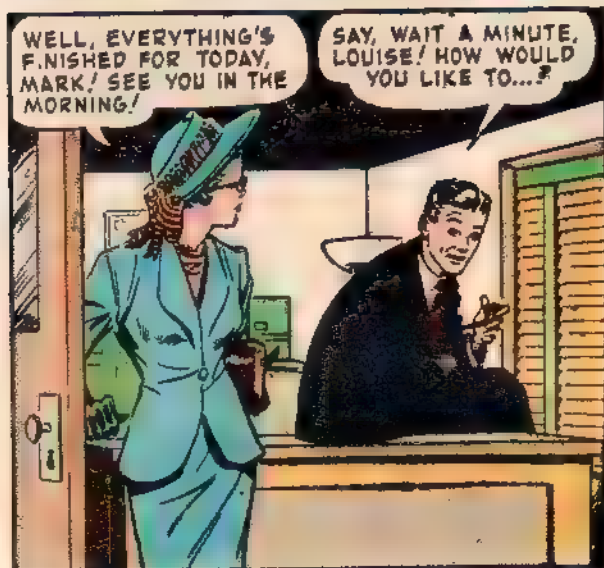
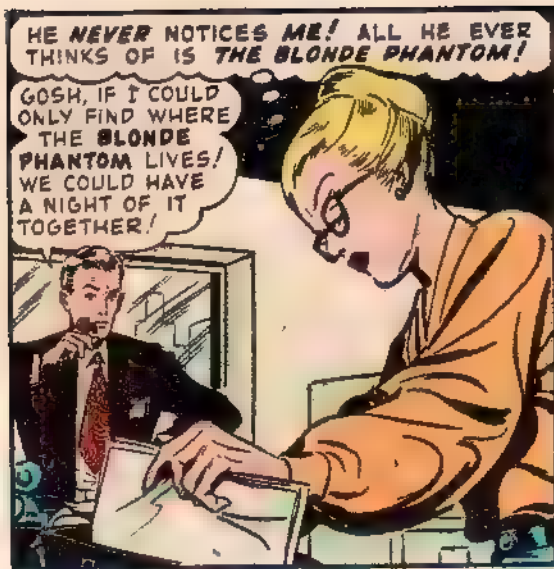
BLONDE PHANTOM



THE END OF ANOTHER DAY AT MARK MASON'S DETECTIVE AGENCY...

HO-HUM! ANOTHER DULL EVENING AHEAD OF ME, LOUISE! WISH I COULD THINK OF SOMETHING EXCITING TO DO!





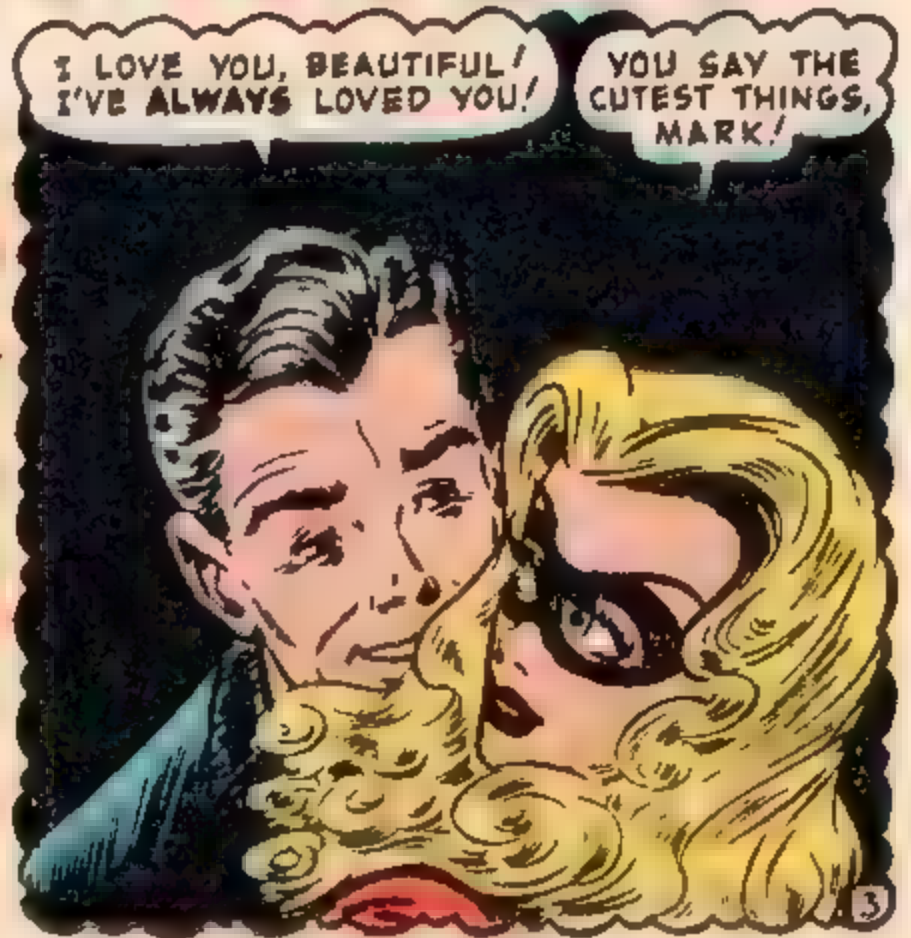
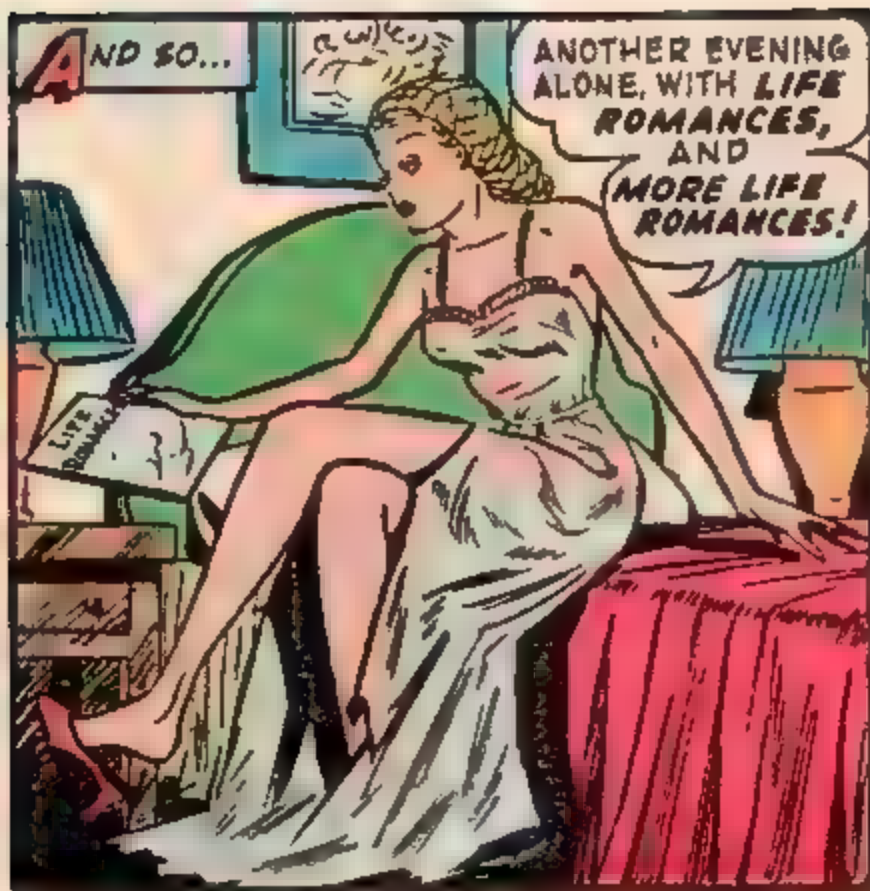
HUH? YES, WHAT IS IT, MARK?

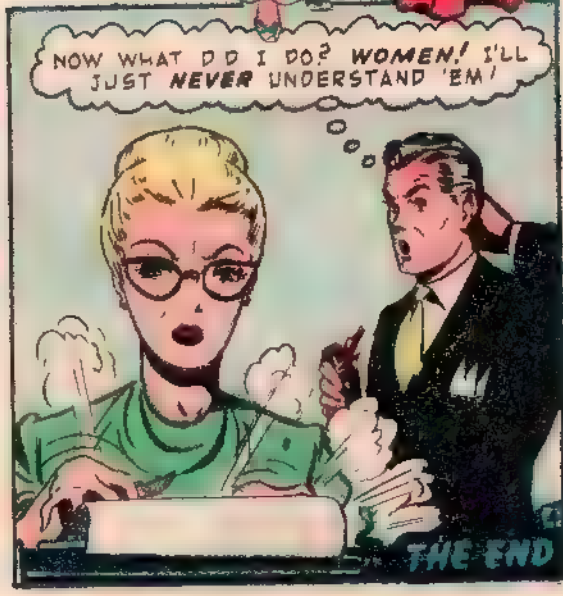
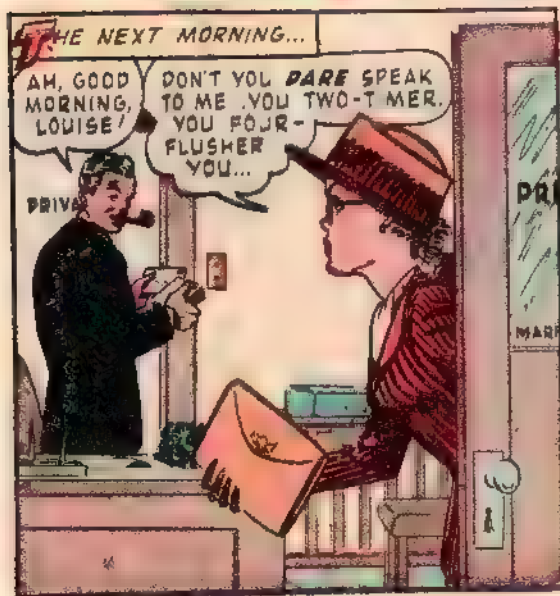
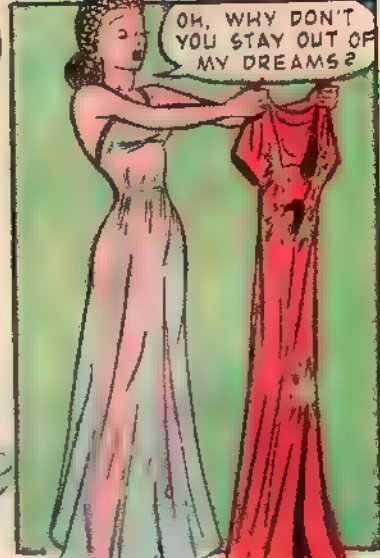
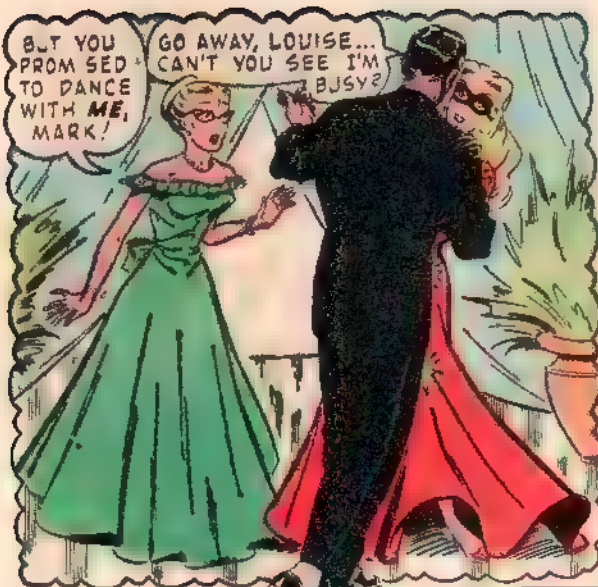


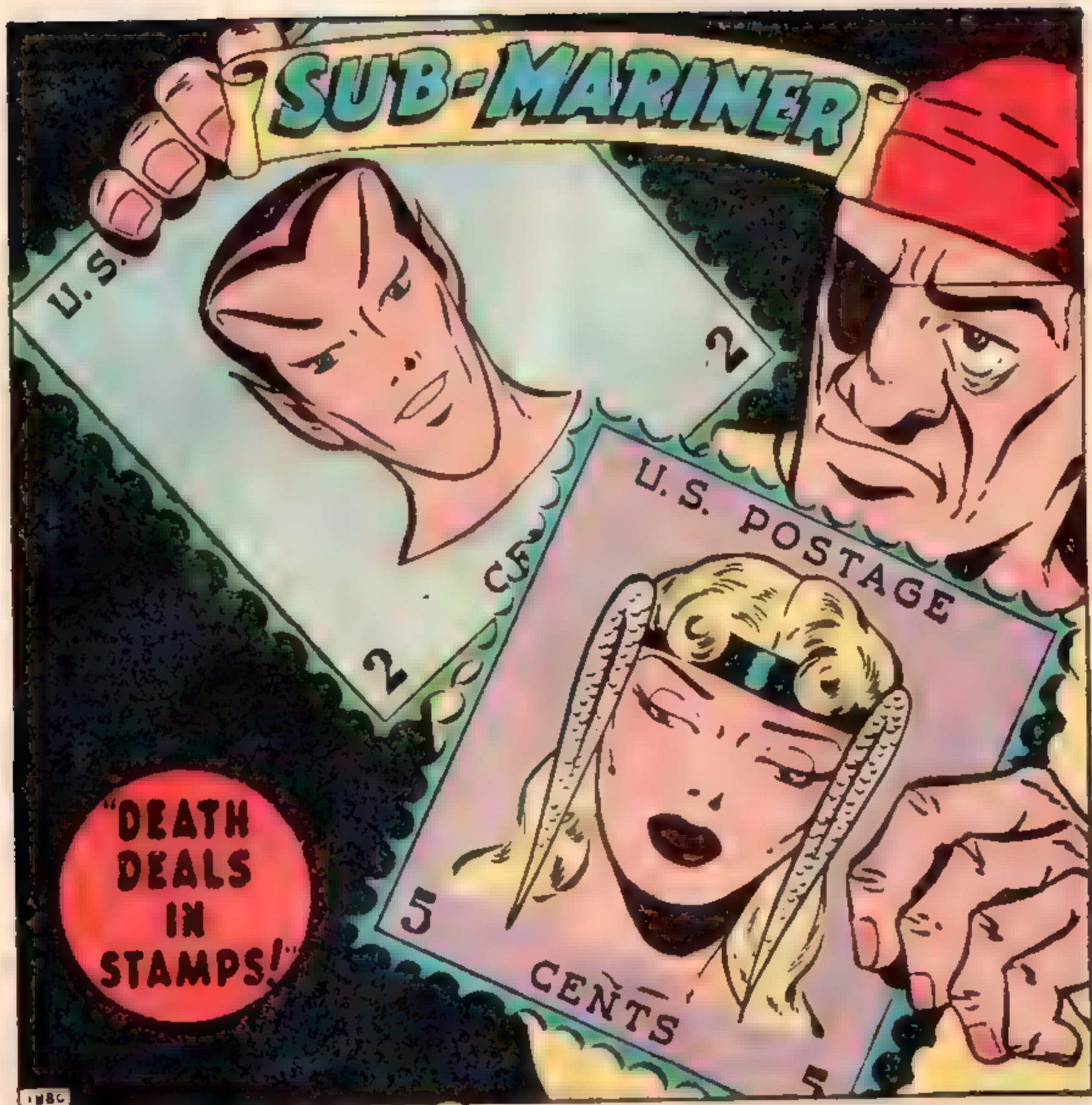
WELL, I... ER... NEVER MIND! IT WASN'T IMPORTANT! GOOD NIGHT, LOUISE!



HUH? NOW WHAT'S SHE SO MAD ABOUT?



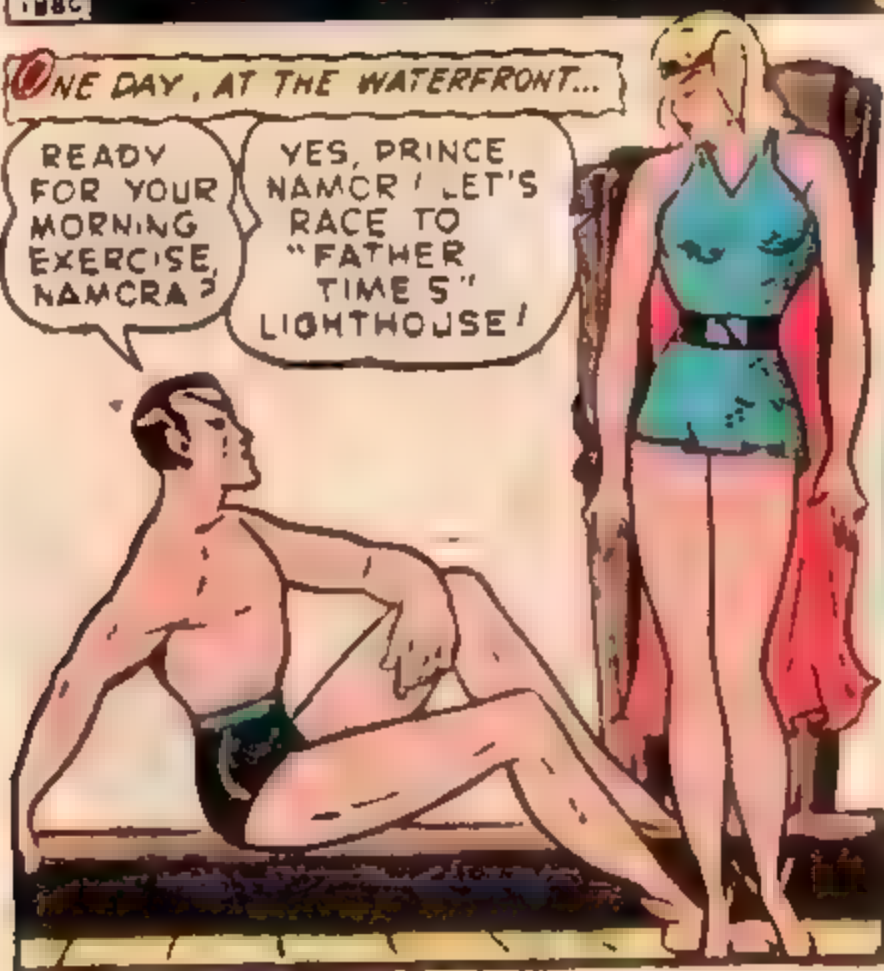




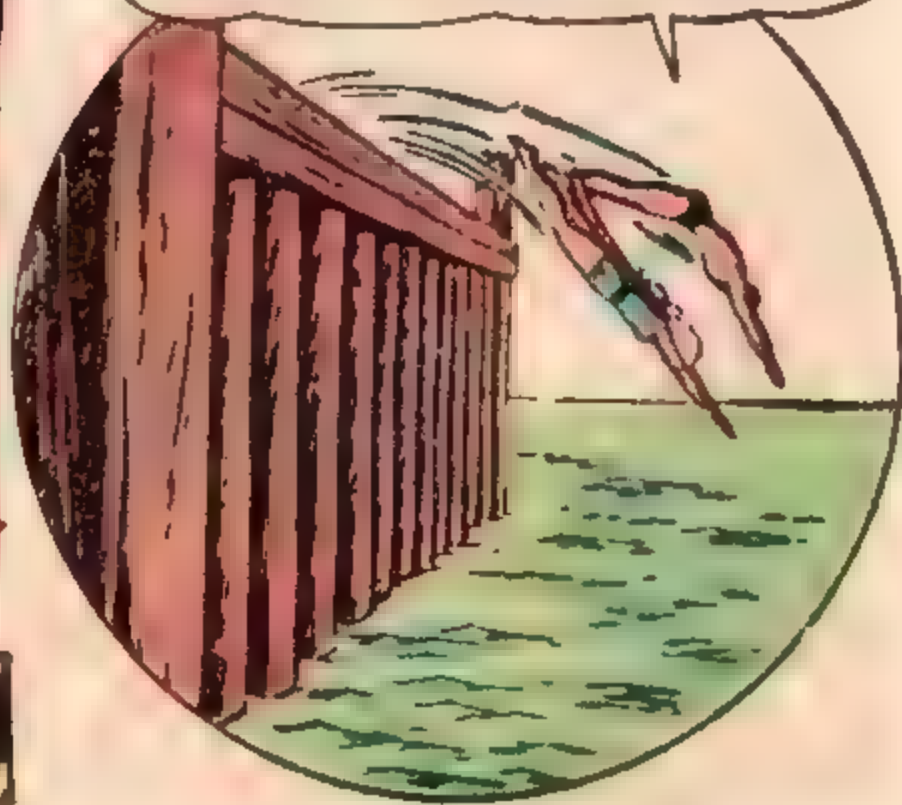
ONE DAY, AT THE WATERFRONT...

READY FOR YOUR MORNING EXERCISE, NAMORA?

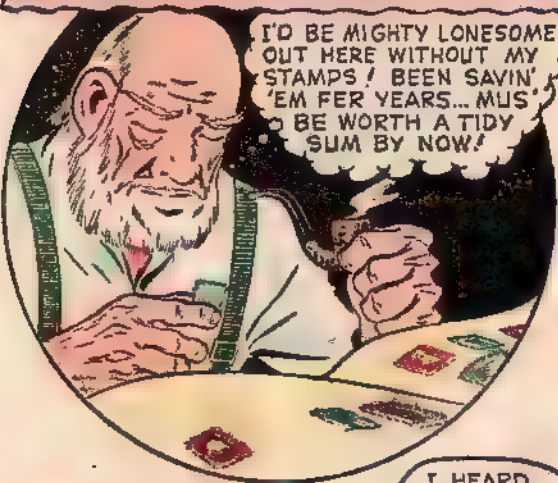
YES, PRINCE NAMOR! LET'S RACE TO "FATHER TIME'S" LIGHTHOUSE!



GO! AND WE'LL PAY A VISIT TO "FATHER TIME" HIMSELF. WE HAVEN'T SEEN HIM IN A COUPLE OF WEEKS!



A AT THAT MOMENT, KINDLY OLD "FATHER TIME" THE LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER, IS LOOKING THROUGH HIS VALUABLE STAMP COLLECTION...



I'D BE MIGHTY LONESOME OUT HERE WITHOUT MY STAMPS! BEEN SAVIN' 'EM FER YEARS... MUS' BE WORTH A TIDY SUM BY NOW!

A MOTOR BOAT PULLS UP TO THE ISLAND, AND...



MOMENTS LATER!



AH! JUST THE MAN I WANT TO SEE!

WHA...? SAY! WHO ARE YA?

I HEARD ABOUT YER STAMP COLLECTION! I'M OFFERIN' YA A THOUSAND EVEN FER IT!

YOU'RE DAFT, MAN! I'M **NOT** SELLING IT T'ANYONE! NOW GIT OUT O' HERE!

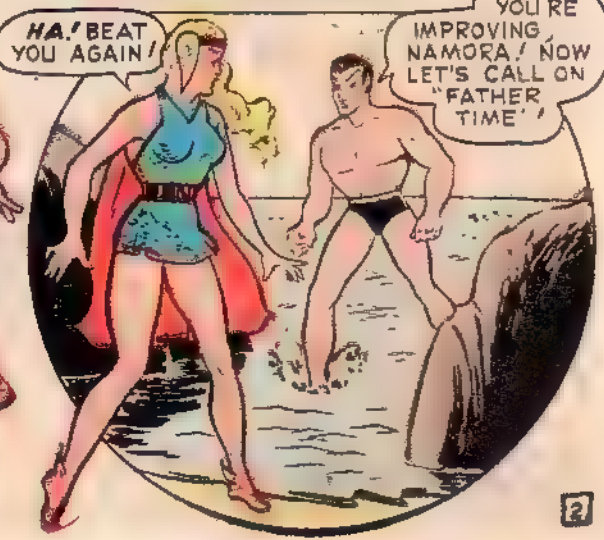


IN THAT CASE, I'LL **TAKE** IT... FER NOTHIN'! YA STUBBORN OLD FOOL!

IT'S CHEAPER THIS WAY, ANYHOW! AN' NO ONE WILL KNOW THAT I, THE **PIRATE** HAVE BEEN HERE!



A WHILE LATER, THE SWIMMING DUO REACHES ITS DESTINATION...



HA! BEAT YOU AGAIN!

YOU'RE IMPROVING, NAMORA! NOW LET'S CALL ON "FATHER TIME"!

THEN!

IT'S 'FATHER TIME'!
HE'S BEEN SHOT!

OH... IS
HE...?

DEAD-POOR
OLD FELLOW!
WE'VE GOT A
CASE ON OUR
HANDS,
NAMORA!

THERE'S A COUPLE OF STAMPS
ON HIS DESK! BUT WHERE'S HIS
BIG ALBUM? **IT'S GONE!** HE
ALWAYS KEPT IT HERE!

SO
THAT'S IT! SOMEONE
STOLE HIS VALUABLE
COLLECTION! PROBABLY
TO SELL IT TO A DEALER!
AND HE HAD TO COMMIT
MURDER TO GET IT!

LOOK, PRINCE NAMOR!
IT LOOKS AS IF HE WAS
TRYING TO WRITE
SOMETHING WITH
HIS PIPE STEM
BEFORE HE DIED!

A SKULL AND CROSSBONES!
THE INSIGNIA OF A
PIRATE! **PIRATE!**
COULD HE HAVE
BEEN ACCUSING
"PIRATE"
FLETCHER AS
HIS MURDERER?

SWIFT SECONDS LATER...

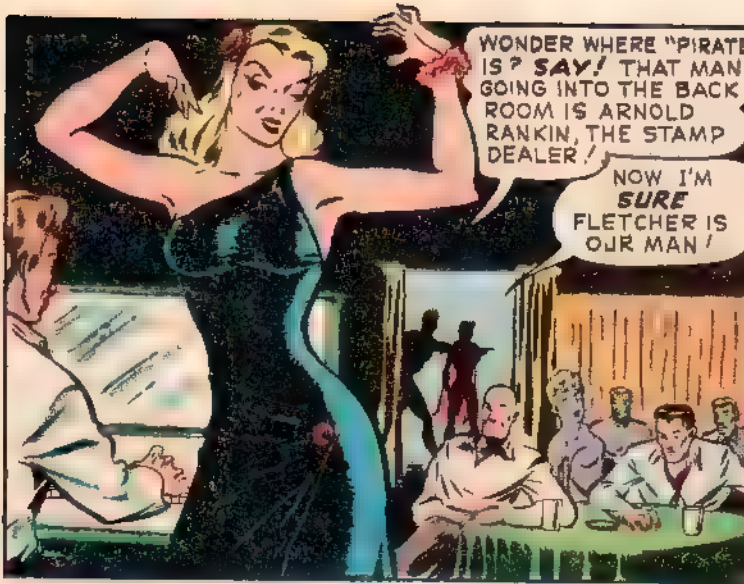
C'MON, NAMORA! FIRST WE'LL REPORT
TO THE HARBOR POLICE! THEN FOR A
VISIT TO "P RATE" FLETCHER'S
WATERFRONT CAFE!

TOON...

A PRETTY TOUGH BUNCH HANGS
AROUND HERE! MAYBE YOU'D
BETTER STAY
OUTSIDE, NAMORA!

NOTHING DOING! WE'RE
WORKING TOGETHER AS
ALWAYS! I'M
GOING WITH YOU!

PIRATE
FLETCHER'S
CAFE



WONDER WHERE "PIRATE" IS? SAY! THAT MAN GOING INTO THE BACK ROOM IS ARNOLD RANKIN, THE STAMP DEALER!

NOW I'M SURE FLETCHER IS OUR MAN!

TAKE A LOOK! OLD MAN "TIME'S" STAMPS! FIGURE OUT WHAT THEY'RE WORTH!

HMM, THIS FRENCH-GUIANA STAMP IS WORTH AT LEAST SIX THOUSAND!

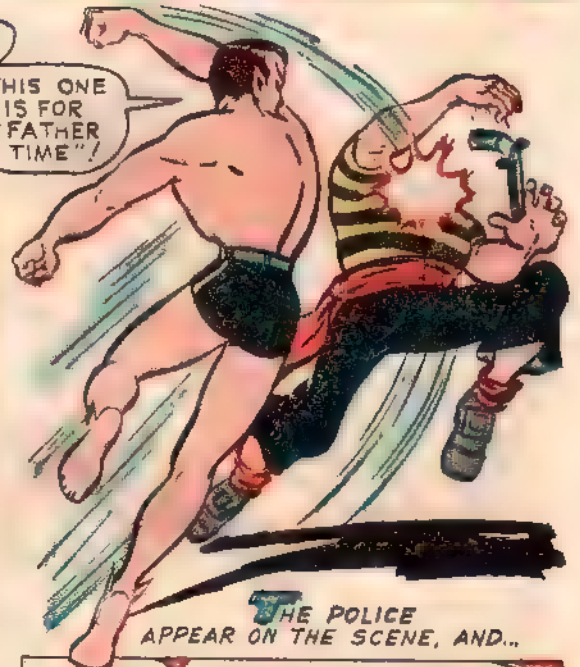


THEN!

GET READY FOR THE PAY-OFF, KILLER!

SUB-MARINER!

THIS ONE IS FOR "FATHER TIME"!

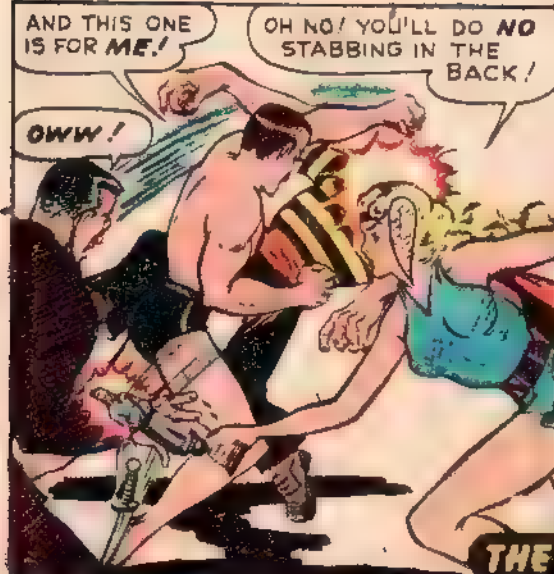


THE POLICE APPEAR ON THE SCENE, AND...

AND THIS ONE IS FOR ME!

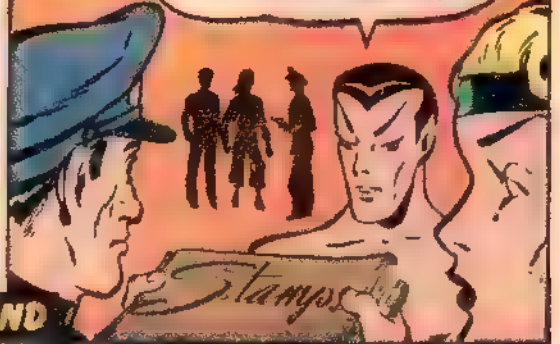
OH NO! YOU'LL DO NO STABBING IN THE BACK!

OWW!



THANKS FOR YOUR HELP, SUB-MARINER!

ARRANGE FOR A PUBLIC AUCTION OF THE STAMPS, CHIEF! THE OLD SAILORS' HOME NEEDS FUNDS BADLY! I'M SURE "FATHER TIME" WOULD WANT THE MONEY TO HELP HIS OLD SEA-FARING FRIENDS!



THE END



BLAZING GLORY

THE end was very near. The worst of it was that everyone worried about Detective Mike Clancy. Papa Mike to the force. Thirty-six years had been a long time and now, with the end almost a reality, Mike found it didn't look so good. If only everyone weren't so solicitous . . .

"You'd think," Mike mourned to himself, "I hadn't been a cop all these years and couldn't stand on my own two feet."

Which definitely wasn't the case. Mike had plenty of footage to stand on. But of late his life had become sedentary. Nothing had happened. Everyone in the department, from top to bottom almost, seemed bitten by a protective urge.

Now Mike stalked down the hall just as someone burst out of a side office. Mike avoided collision by dexterously side-stepping. "Blow your horn—saaay. What's eating you, Philly?"

Phil paused. The scowl grudgingly slid away from his youthful face, to be replaced by a patronizing smile. "Everything's honey and sugar. Just waiting for the bees . . ."

"Cut it out. You forget you're trying to kid a vet, sonny boy."

Philly's forced smile slid into dark uneasiness. "The works are coming down from upstairs. It's getting too hot."

"Barlander case?" Coming from Papa Mike it was a statement. "Pulled his old stunt again, eh?"

Philly snapped his fingers. "Gone into thin air. The old man's going to have the case busted or—us!"

Mike Clancy's mind moved smoothly. Barlander had a reputation that stretched far and wide, and took in everything from the petty rackets on up to murder and kidnapping. His

cleverness had slipped him through the cops' fingers too often.

Mike's eyes twinkled as he turned away. "Barlander interests me. I'll be seeing you."

"Hey, wait—"

Mike Clancy was aware of Philly behind him, cussing under his breath. Philly was a nice kid but he didn't know the ropes too well. And there were a couple of angles that could stand checking. Mike wondered that he hadn't thought of them until just now.

Over at the county clerk's office, Papa Mike Clancy worked slowly and methodically. By the middle of the afternoon he had the lists he wanted. One contained farms and summer cottages owned and operated. The second was a listing of parcels to be put up for auction for unpaid taxes.

Mike Clancy walked into the street. Sliding behind the wheel of his coupe, he drove off. His eyes were a thoughtful, hard blue. Briefly he glanced at the list he'd made up at the clerk's office.

Process of elimination. It didn't take too long. By evening Mike Clancy had checked off a good half of his prospects. In most cases all he needed was a single glance to tell him it wasn't any use wasting time on further investigation. Now there was one more stop near-by and after that . . .

Parking the coupe in the woods, Mike Clancy got out and moved stealthily through the darkness. Eventually he came to a break in the underbrush. At one spot he found what were obviously the tire marks. At another place the weeds were high and strong, showing a dab of grease. Yes, a car had recently come along this way.

Mike Clancy pushed through the woods, until he came within sight of a farm house.

Continued ➡

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Carefully he circled. The windows were boarded over. The back stoop was in need of repairs, and the paint was peeling off in long, ugly strips. Cautiously he continued the investigation, which eventually took him through a casement window into a cellar where he stumbled over something on the floor. It was pliant and soft, like a body.

It *was* a body. Mike's fingers told him. There was a wet stickiness, too. For a second Mike crouched on his heels. He risked a light, unbuttoned it again with a faint, sharp intake of breath.

Philly lay on the floor, trussed and gagged. His eyes were closed and blood had spattered his face and shoulders. But he was still breathing. Swiftly then he cut the young detective's bonds, removed the gag. He straightened him out on the floor as comfortably as possible.

Once more Mike Clancy moved on. This time he found the stairs. The door at the head of them opened easily. Indeed, too easily for a house long idle. Mike Clancy stepped through. His .38 was ready in one big paw.

Slowly, he slid forward, his big feet noiseless on the bare boards. There was an angry song in his heart. Philly in the cellar. Philly had evidently gotten a lead. But he'd slipped up somewhere along the way . . .

A door. Voices from beyond. Mike Clancy rolled the knob gently. A second later he was inside.

The odds were three to one. Trigger work was fast. The concussion of shots left a loud ringing in Mike Clancy's ears. Across the room he had the satisfaction of seeing two of the roughly dressed gangsters double up and go down. The third had been one too many—

Mike Clancy felt the smashing impact of a bullet. His body spun away, struck the wall and slid forward—

Savagely Mike Clancy fought against unconsciousness. He was on his feet, swaying limply, grinding his teeth against the almost intolerable desire to let go. Dimly, he realized that the third member had leaped into the hall beyond. Barlander himself!

Lucky guy. Always. Even in the past—

Papa Mike Clancy shoved himself forward. The threatening darkness was gone now and his body was coordinated. He slammed him-

self into the hall. Silence closed about him. Barlander was escaping.

The front of the house faced the county road. Mike Clancy actioned forward, ripped the door open and heaved through. He floundered down the stairs, raced around the side of the house—

Nowhere could he see or hear anything. Had Barlander escaped through the back into the woods? For a moment Mike paused, aware for the first time that he was weaponless. After the impact of that bullet he had acted automatically . . .

Somewhere a lock scrapped. The back door . . . Mike slid forward. He groped at one of the steps leading up to the stoop. Rotted wood crumbled. Mike placed the step-board at an angle. He darted back, pressed against the wall.

Someone lurched across the porch and down the stairs—

A board snapped crunchingly. A flying figure hurtled forward, sprawled to the ground. There was a savage cursing and scrambling—

But Mike Clancy moved in, his big body functioning swiftly. He was over the tumbled figure as it came erect. Mike's big fist crashed in, smothering the white face almost completely with its hugeness. He felt the crushing of bone under the impact, felt a sense of gratitude and relief rush at him as he saw Barlander's slinky body fly helplessly through the air. Animal courage brought him staggering to his feet.

Once more Mike Clancy was waiting and ready. Again his fist crushed in, slamming with all the power of his aching body. This time Barlander went down to stay.

Briefly Mike Clancy stared down. He ached all over. But it was done now. The next thing was to get this killer tied up, get Philly back to town.

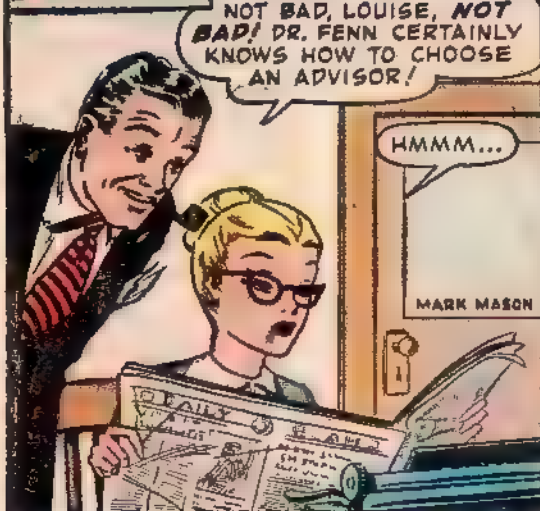
It wouldn't be long now, Mike Clancy suddenly remembered. He was going out on pension, but now he wouldn't mind. He wasn't going in the prosaic, disinterested way of something being shelved forever. He was going *with* his shield, not *upon* it. Going in a blaze of glory.

THE END

BLONDE PHANTOM



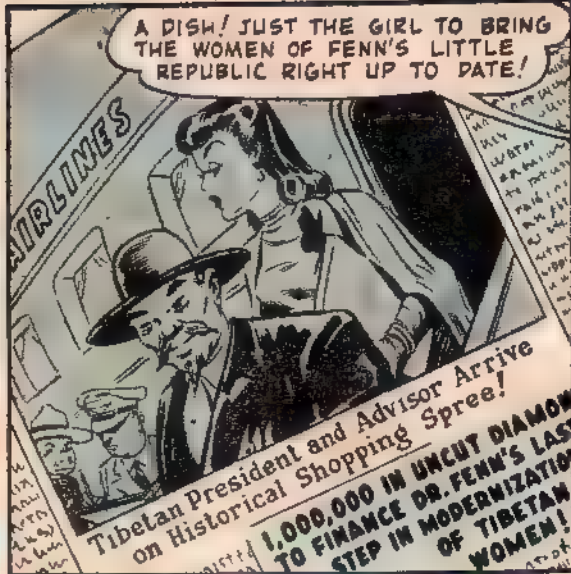
IN THE OFFICE OF MARK MASON, PRIVATE DETECTIVE...



NOT BAD, LOUISE, **NOT BAD!** DR. FENN CERTAINLY KNOWS HOW TO CHOOSE AN ADVISOR!

HMMM...

MARK MASON

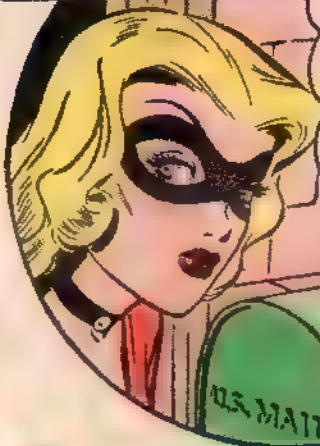


I'M TAKING THE AFTERNOON OFF... FOR A LITTLE SHOPPING OF MY OWN!



HEY, LOUISE— NOTHING PERSONAL! PERSONALLY, I LIKE **SECRETARIES** TO DRESS CONSERVATIVELY!

L LOUISE GRANT— CONSERVATIVE? WELL, PERHAPS BUT CERTAINLY NOT AS THE **BLONDE PHANTOM!**



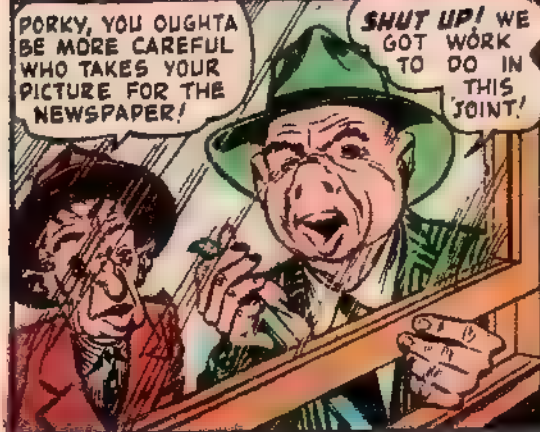
MEN! IF MARK ONLY OPENED HIS EYES TO SOMETHING BESIDES DR. FENN'S ADVISOR, HE MIGHT HAVE SEEN SOMETHING REALLY INTERESTING IN THAT NEWS PHOTO!

AND INSIDE THE CONSULATE...

M MEANWHILE, OUTSIDE THE CONSULATE OF THE REPUBLIC OF TIBET...

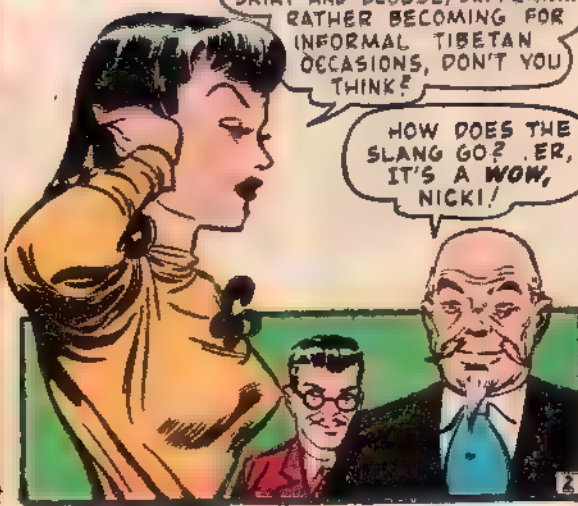
PORKY, YOU OUGHTA BE MORE CAREFUL WHO TAKES YOUR PICTURE FOR THE NEWSPAPER!

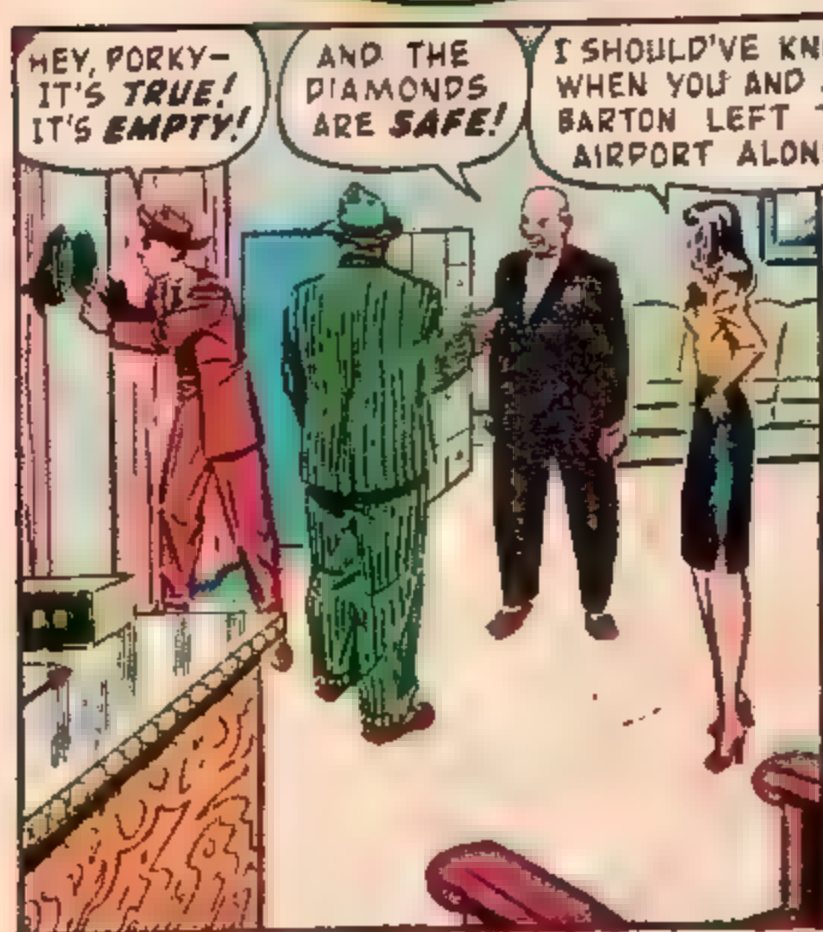
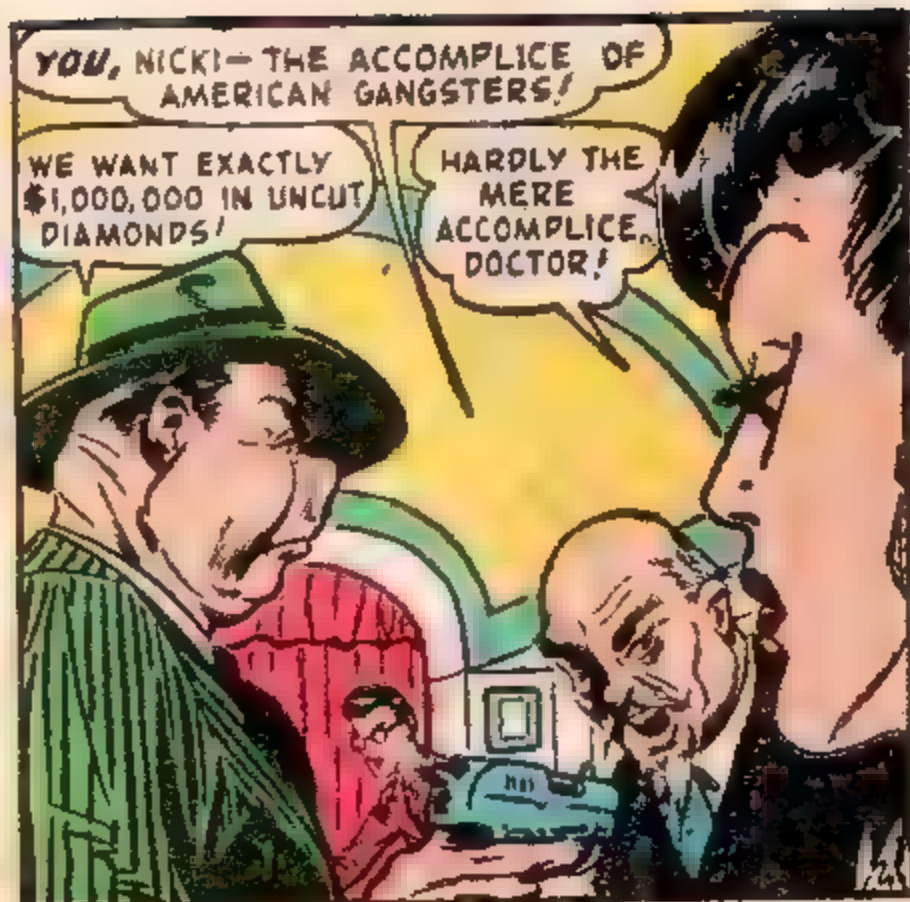
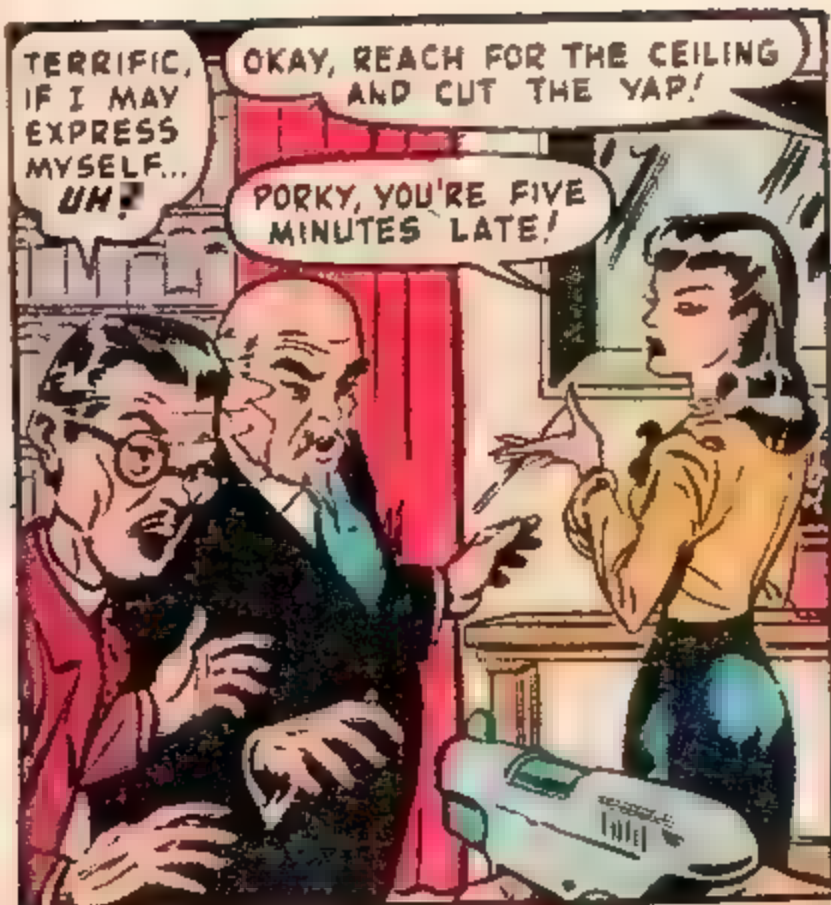
SHUT UP! WE GOT WORK TO DO IN THIS JOINT!

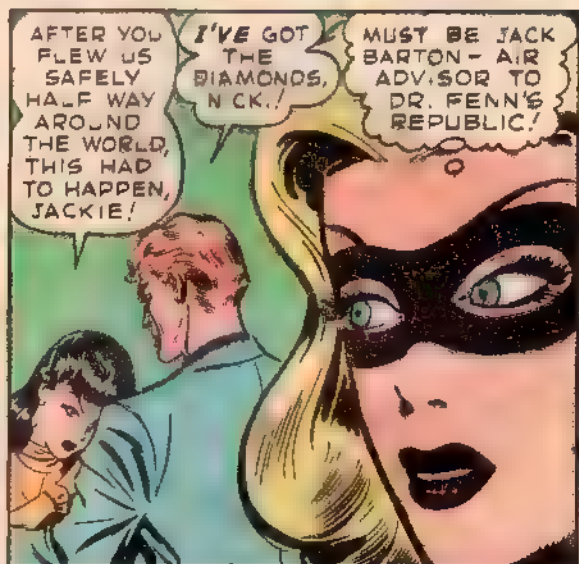
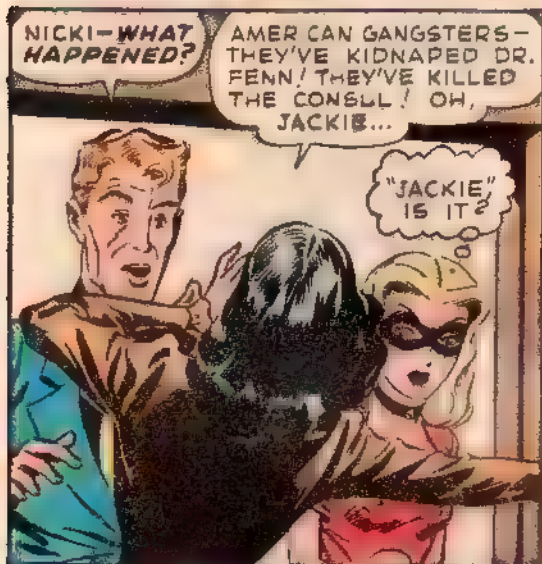
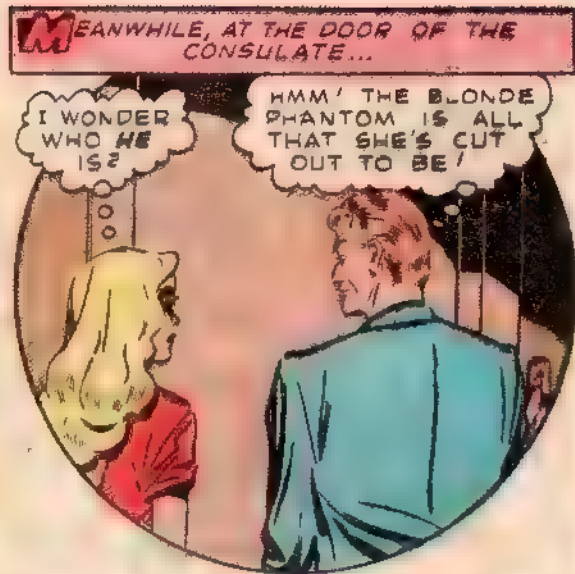
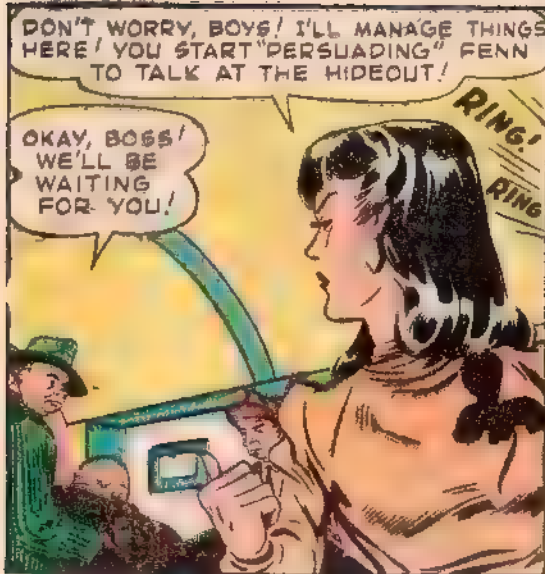


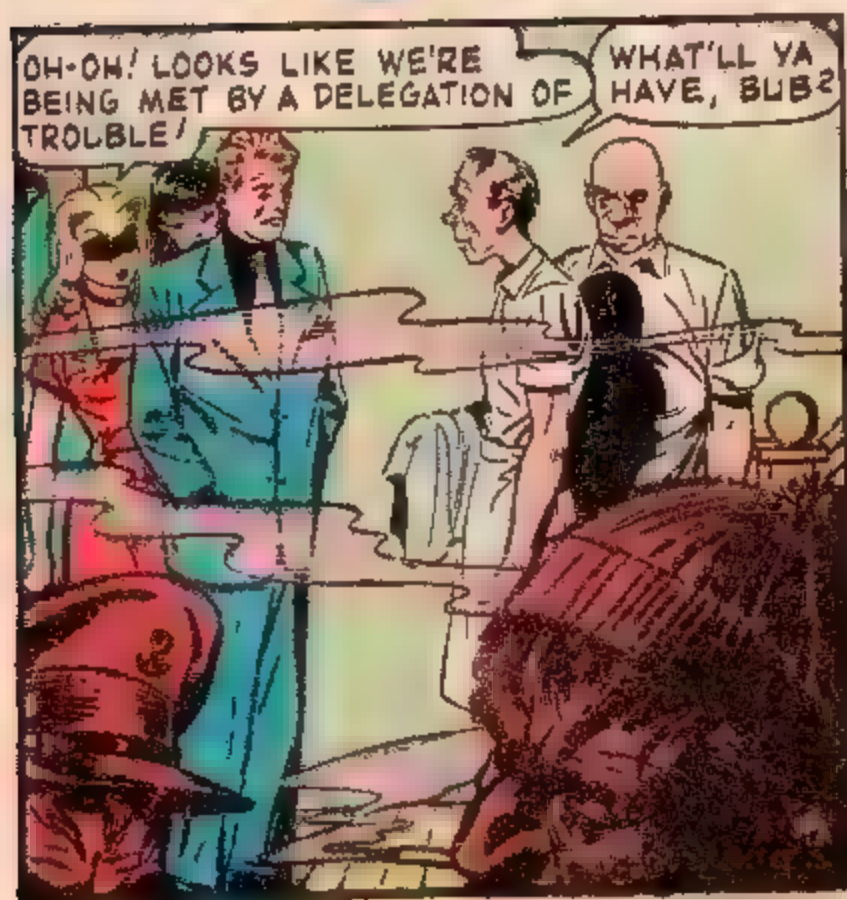
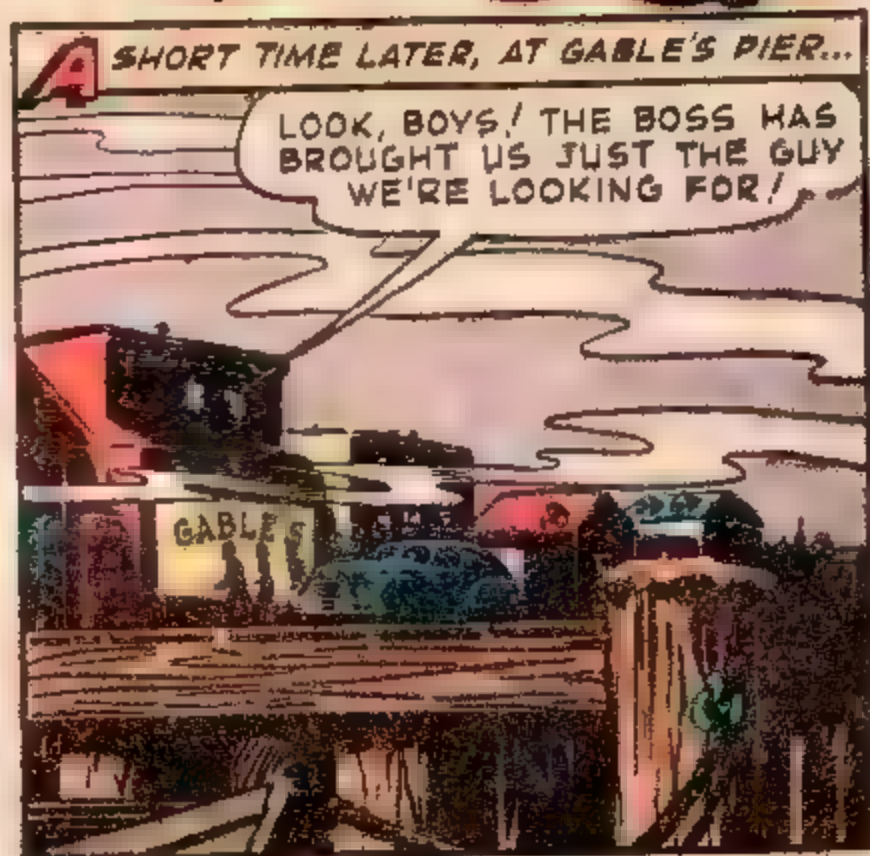
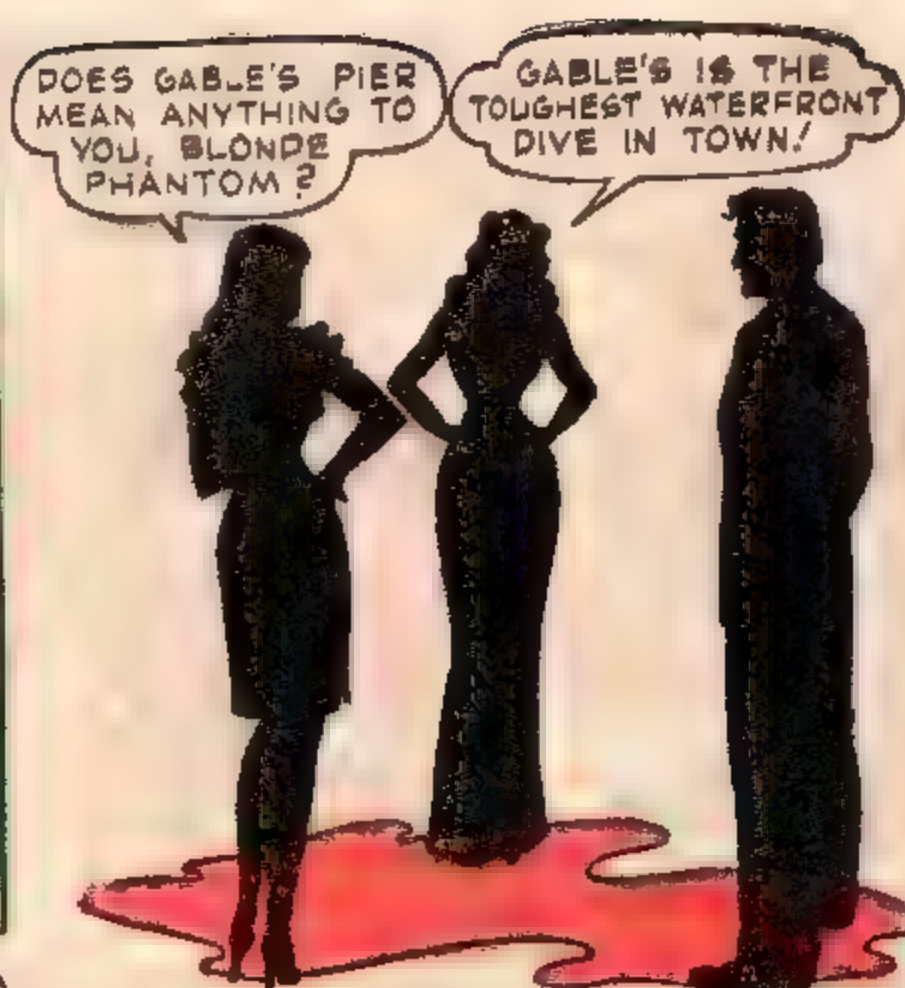
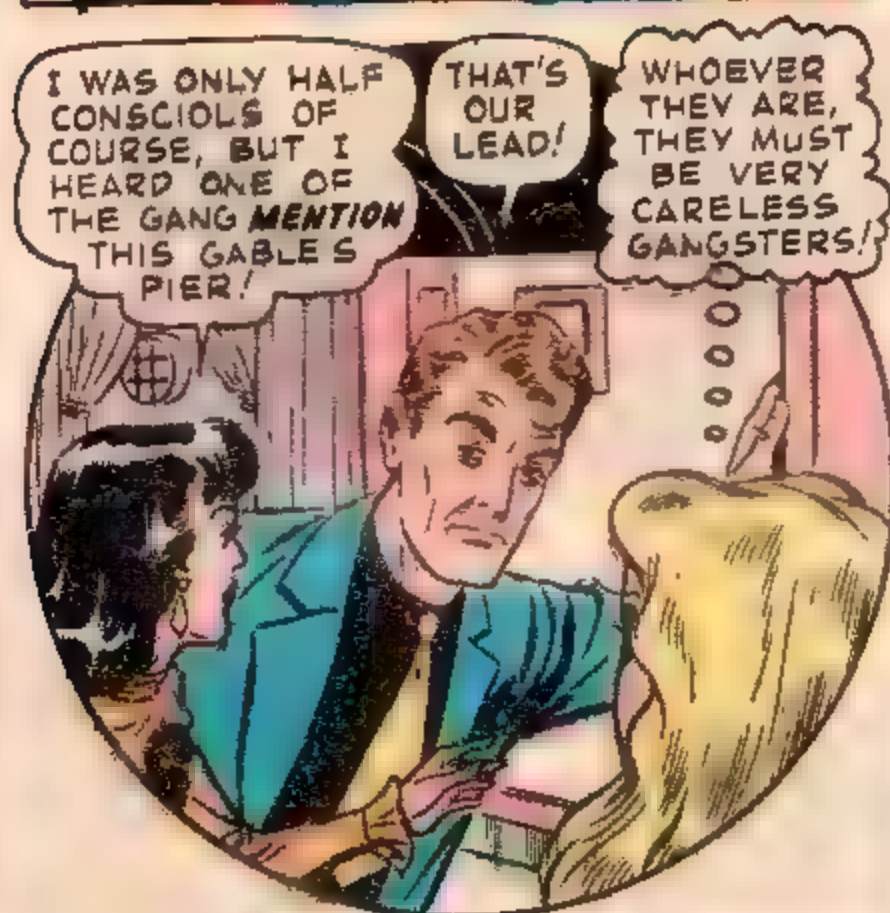
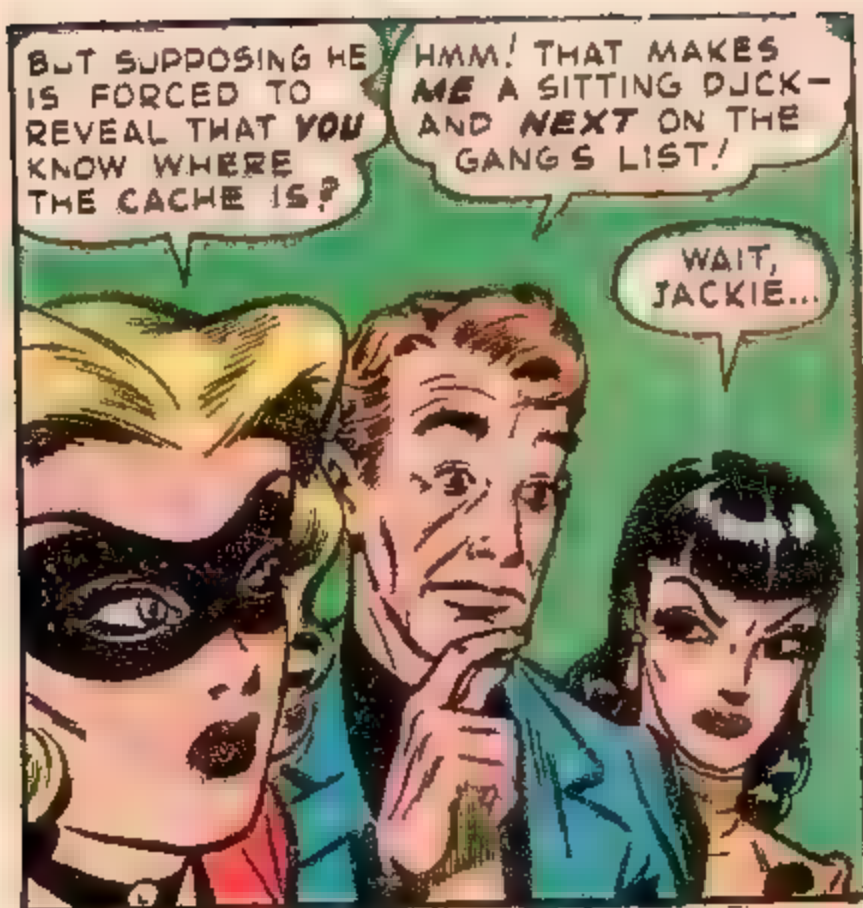
SKIRT AND BLOUSE, DR. FENN... RATHER BECOMING FOR INFORMAL TIBETAN OCCASIONS, DON'T YOU THINK?

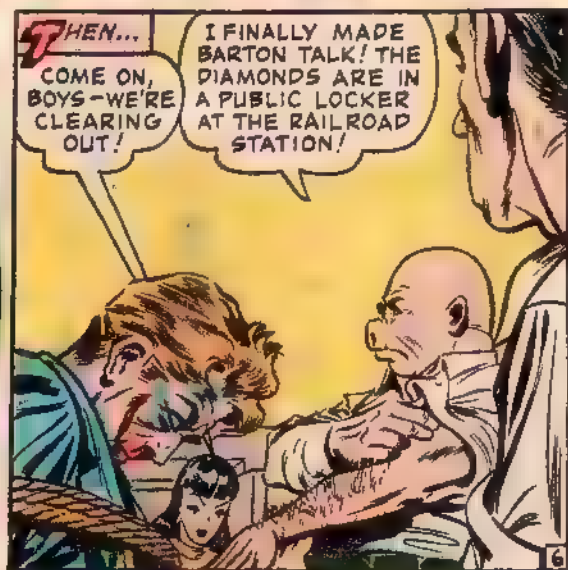
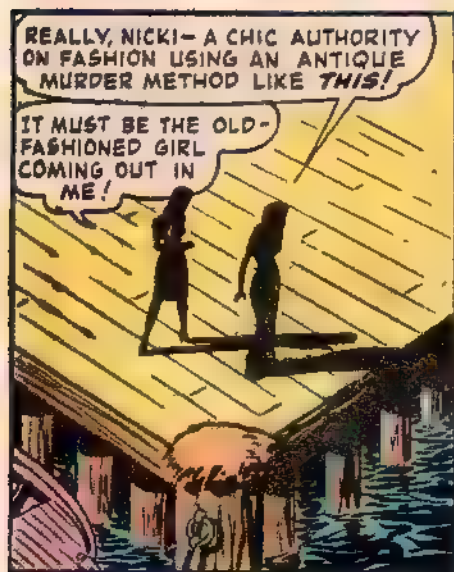
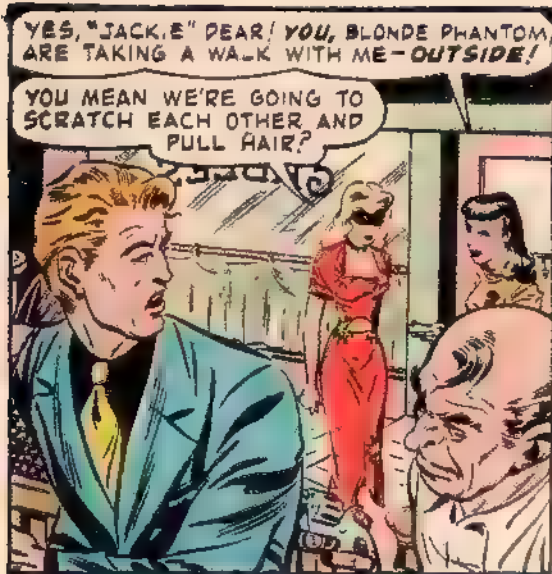
HOW DOES THE SLANG GO? ER, IT'S A **WOW**, NICKI!

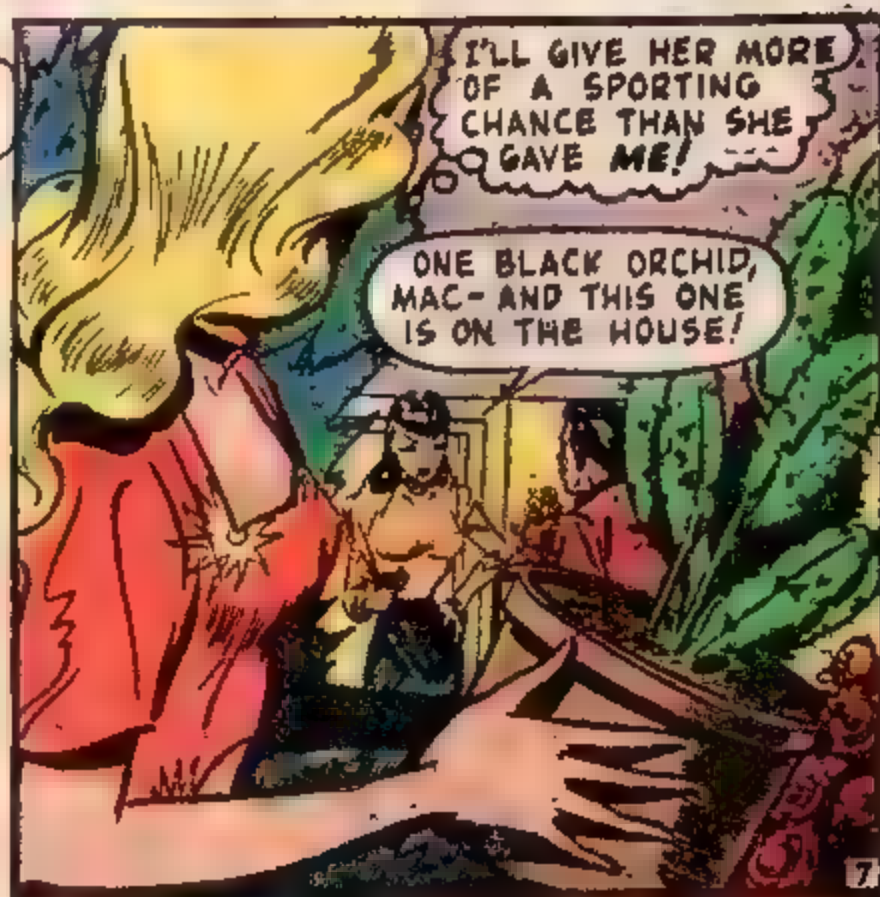
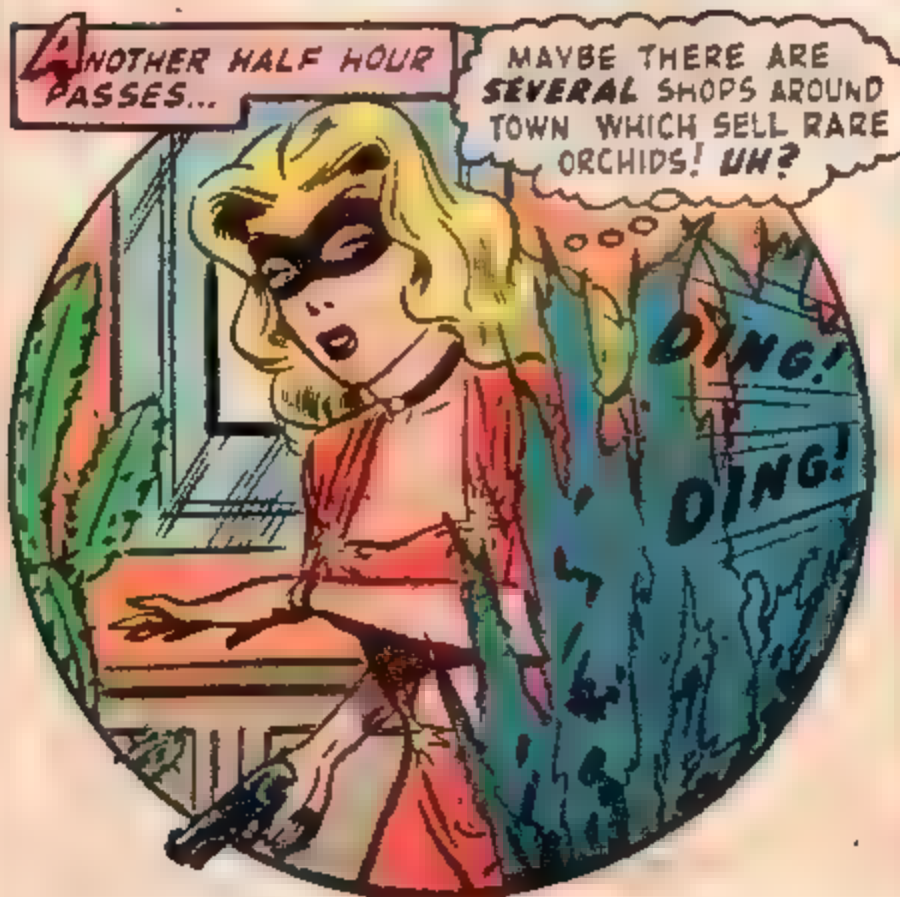
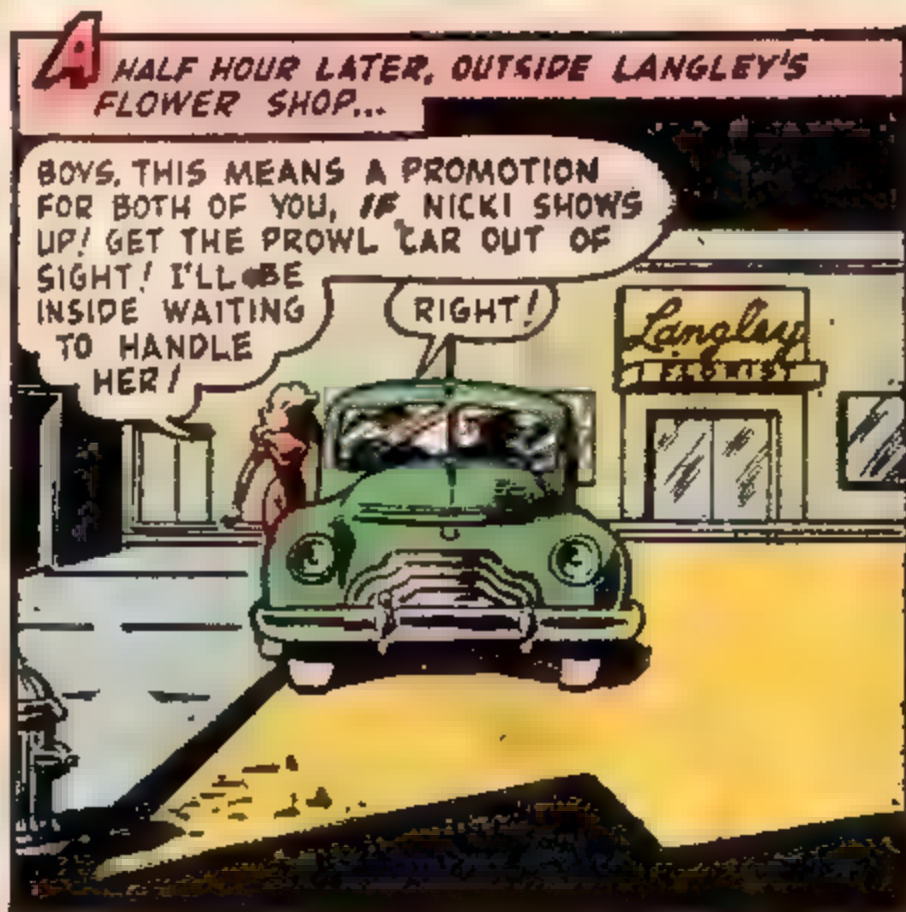
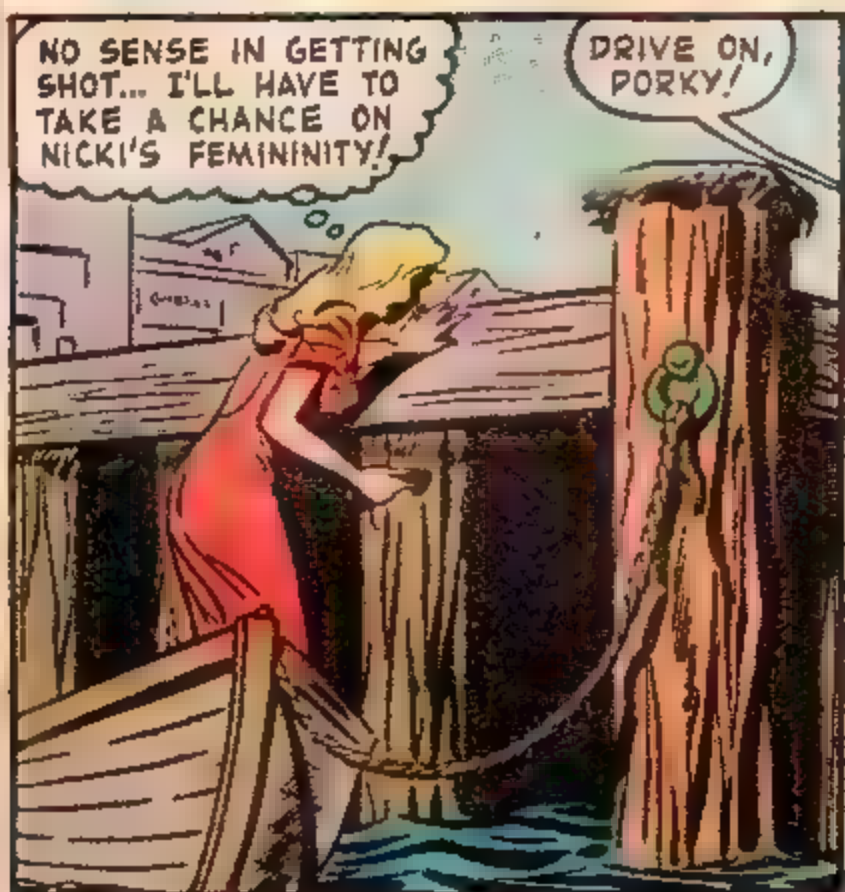
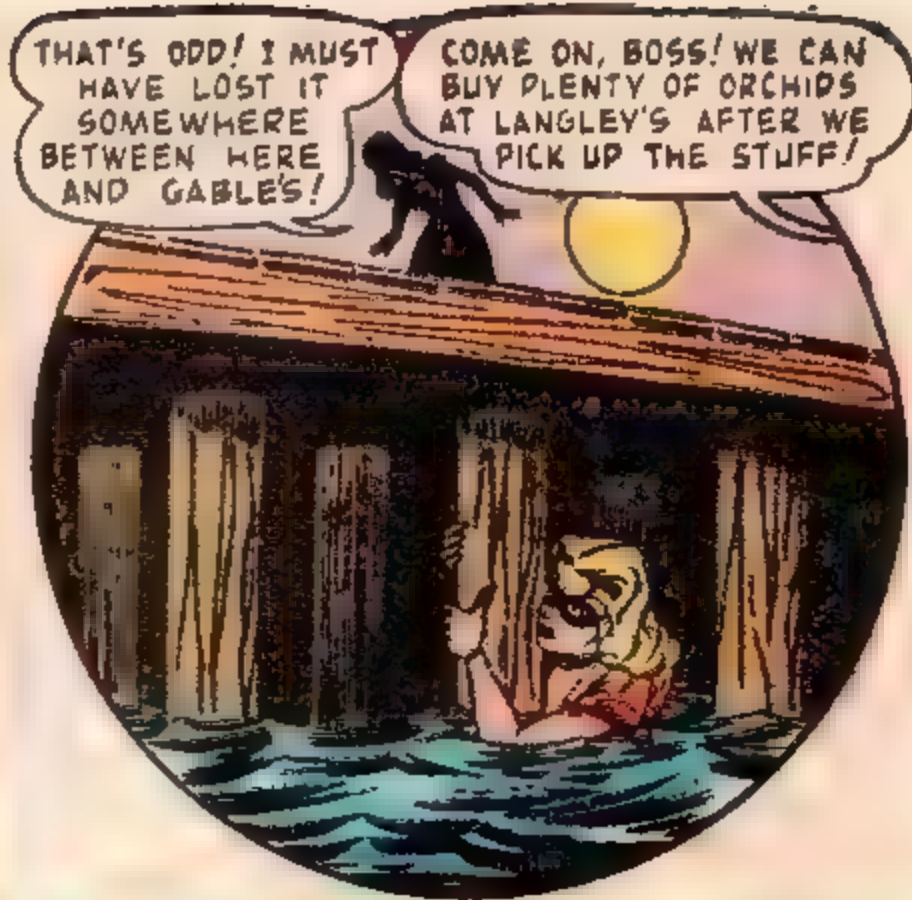
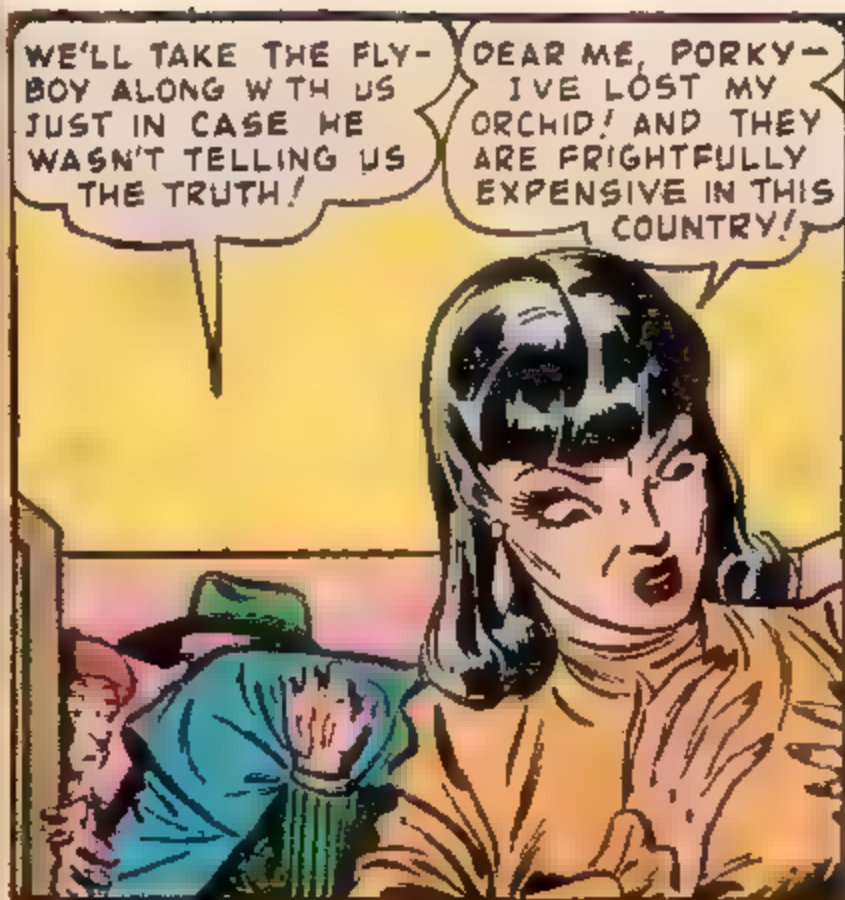


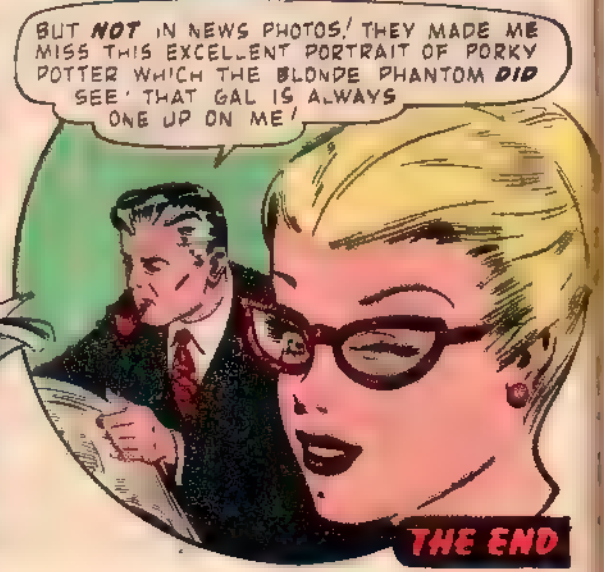
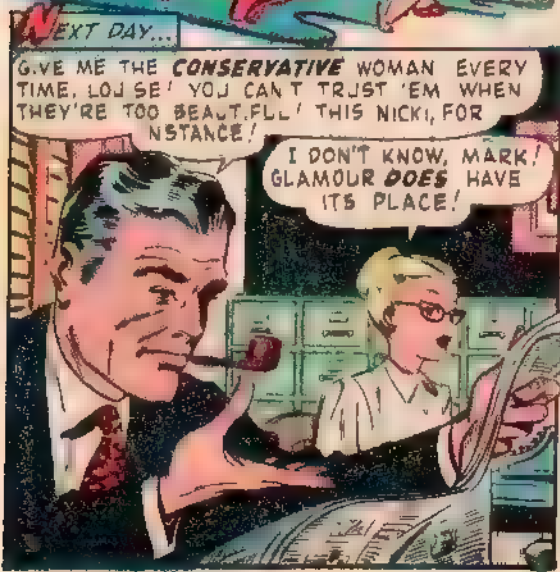








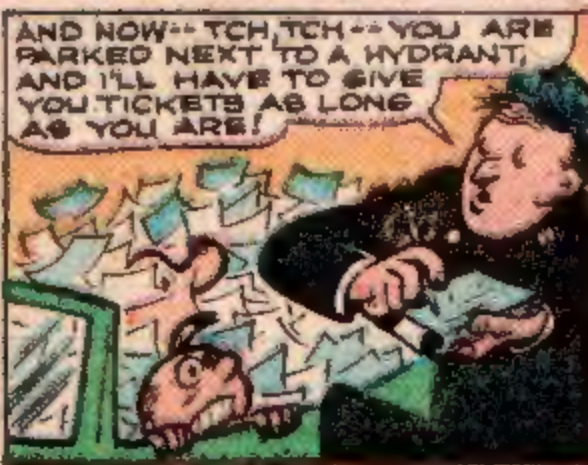
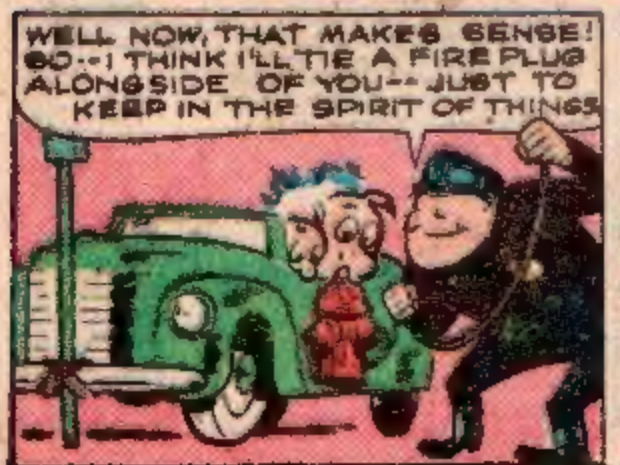
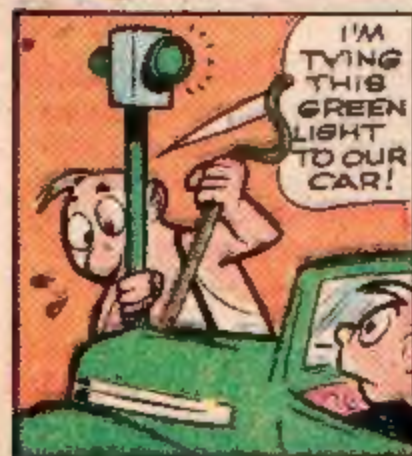
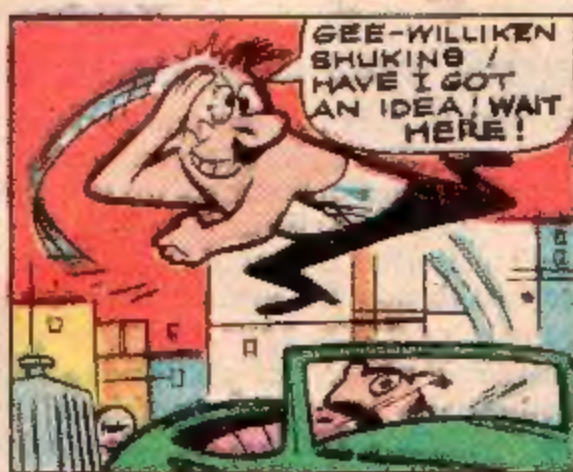
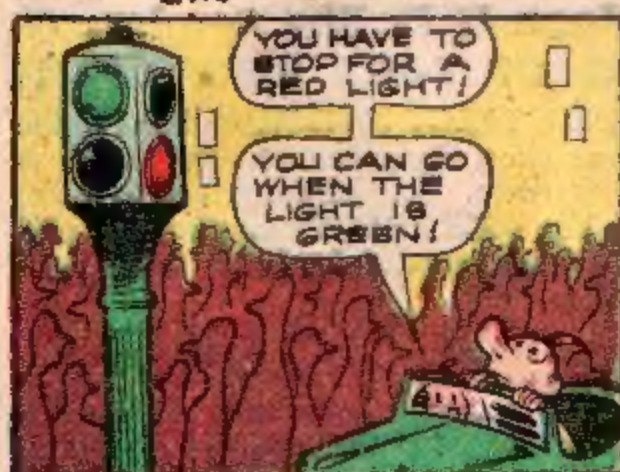




HEY, LOOK



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